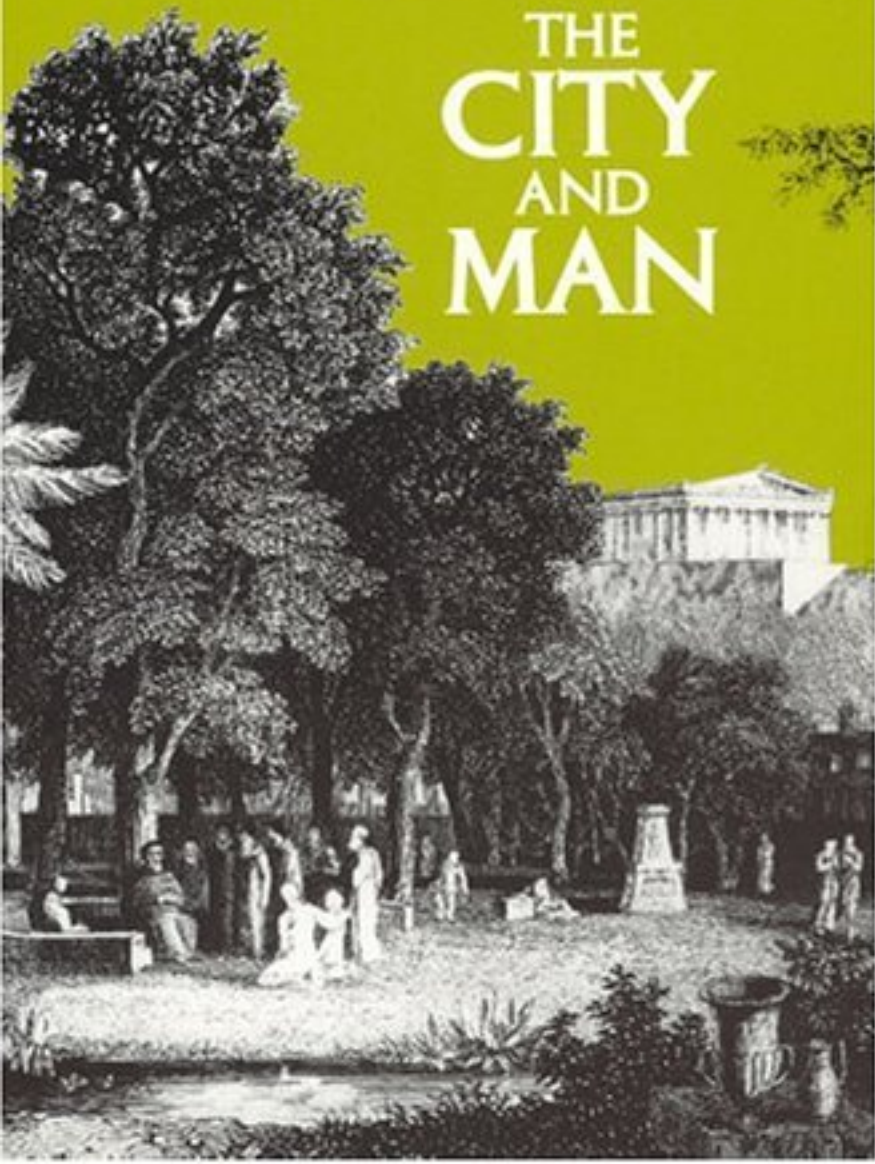


LEO STRAUSS

THE CITY AND MAN



Chapter II

ON PLATO'S REPUBLIC

Generally speaking, we can know the thought of a man only through his speeches oral or written. We can know Aristotle's political philosophy through his *Politics*. Plato's *Republic* on the other hand, in contradistinction to the *Politics*, is not a treatise but a dialogue among people other than Plato. Whereas in reading the *Politics* we hear Aristotle all the time, in reading the *Republic* we hear Plato never. In none of his dialogues does Plato ever say anything. Hence we cannot know from them what Plato thought. If someone quotes a passage from the dialogues in order to prove that Plato held such and such a view, he acts about as reasonably as if he were to assert that according to Shakespeare life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But this is a silly remark: everyone knows that Plato speaks through the mouth not indeed of his Protagoras, his Callicles, his Menon, his Hippias, and his Thrasymachus, but of his Socrates, his Eleatic stranger, his Timaeus and his Athenian stranger. Plato speaks through the mouths of his spokesmen. But why does he use a variety of spokesmen? Why does he make his Socrates a silent listener to his Timaeus' and his Eleatic stranger's speeches? He does not tell us; no one knows the reason; those who claim to know mistake guesses for knowledge. As long as we do not know that reason, we do not know what it means to be a spokesman for Plato; we do not even know whether there is such a thing as a spokesman for Plato. But this is still sillier: every child knows that the spokesman *par excellence* of Plato is his revered teacher or friend Socrates to whom he entrusted his own teaching fully or in part. We do not wish to appear more ignorant than every child and shall therefore repeat with childlike docility that the spokesman *par excellence* for Plato is Socrates. But it is one of Socrates' peculiarities that he was a master of irony. We are back where we started: to speak through the mouth of a man who is

notorious for his irony seems to be tantamount to not asserting anything. Could it be true that Plato, like his Socrates, the master of the knowledge of ignorance, did not assert anything, i.e. did not have a teaching?

Let us then assume that the Platonic dialogues do not convey a teaching, but, being a monument to Socrates, present the Socratic way of life as a model. Yet they cannot tell us: live as Socrates lived. For Socrates' life was rendered possible by his possession of a "demonic" gift and we do not possess such a gift. The dialogues must then tell us: live as Socrates tells you to live; live as Socrates teaches you to live. The assumption that the Platonic dialogues do not convey a teaching is absurd.

Very much, not to say everything, seems to depend on what Socratic irony is. Irony is a kind of dissimulation, or of untruthfulness. Aristotle therefore treats the habit of irony primarily as a vice. Yet irony is the dissembling, not of evil actions or of vices, but rather of good actions or of virtues; the ironic man, in opposition to the boaster, understates his worth. If irony is a vice, it is a graceful vice. Properly used, it is not a vice at all: the magnanimous man—the man who regards himself as worthy of great things while in fact being worthy of them—is truthful and frank because he is in the habit of looking down and yet he is ironical in his intercourse with the many.¹ Irony is then the noble dissimulation of one's worth, of one's superiority. We may say, it is the humanity peculiar to the superior man: he spares the feelings of his inferiors by not displaying his superiority. The highest form of superiority is the superiority in wisdom. Irony in the highest sense will then be the dissimulation of one's wisdom, i.e. the dissimulation of one's wise thoughts. This can take two forms: either expressing on a "wise" subject such thoughts (e.g. generally accepted thoughts) as are less wise than one's own thoughts or refraining from expressing any thoughts regarding a "wise" subject on the ground that one does not have knowledge regarding it and therefore can only raise questions but cannot give any answers. If irony is essentially related to the fact that there is a natural order of rank among men, it follows that irony consists in speaking differently to different kinds of people.²

While there can be no doubt that Socrates was notorious for his

¹ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1108a19–22; 1124b29–31; 1127a20–26, b22–31.

² Plato, *Rivals* 133d8–e1; cf. 134c1–6.

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irony, it is not much of an exaggeration to say that irony and kindred words "are only used of Socrates by his opponents and have always an unfavorable meaning."¹ To this one could reply that where there was so much smoke there must have been some fire or rather that avowed irony would be absurd. But be this as it may, we certainly must return to the beginning. One cannot understand Plato's teaching as he meant it if one does not know what the Platonic dialogue is. One cannot separate the understanding of Plato's teaching from the understanding of the form in which it is presented. One must pay as much attention to the How as to the What. At any rate to begin with one must even pay greater attention to the "form" than to the "substance," since the meaning of the "substance" depends on the "form." One must postpone one's concern with the most serious questions (the philosophic questions) in order to become engrossed in the study of a merely literary question. Still, there is a connection between the literary question and the philosophic question. The literary question, the question of presentation, is concerned with a kind of communication. Communication may be a means for living together; in its highest form, communication is living together. The study of the literary question is therefore an important part of the study of society. Furthermore, the quest for truth is necessarily, if not in every respect, a common quest, a quest taking place through communication. The study of the literary question is therefore an important part of the study of what philosophy is. The literary question properly understood is the question of the relation between society and philosophy.

Plato's Socrates discusses the literary question—the question concerning writings—in the *Phaedrus*. He says that writing is an invention of doubtful value. He thus makes us understand why he abstained from writing speeches or books. But Plato wrote dialogues. We may assume that the Platonic dialogue is a kind of writing which is free from the essential defect of writings. Writings are essentially defective because they are equally accessible to all who can read or because they do not know to whom to talk and to whom to be silent or because they say the same things to everyone. We may conclude that the Platonic dialogue says different things to different people—not accidentally, as every writing does,

¹ Burnet on Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 38a1. Cf. *Symposium* 218d6-7 and Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1127b25-26.

but that it is so contrived as to say different things to different people, or that it is radically ironical. The Platonic dialogue, if properly read, reveals itself to possess the flexibility or adaptability of oral communication. What it means to read a good writing properly is intimated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* when he describes the character of a good writing. A writing is good if it complies with "logographic necessity," with the necessity which ought to govern the writing of speeches: every part of the written speech must be necessary for the whole; the place where each part occurs is the place where it is necessary that it should occur; in a word, the good writing must resemble the healthy animal which can do its proper work well.⁴ The proper work of a writing is to talk to some readers and to be silent to others. But does not every writing admittedly talk to all readers?

Since Plato's Socrates does not solve this difficulty for us, let us have recourse to Xenophon's Socrates. According to Xenophon, Socrates' art of conversation was twofold. When someone contradicted him on any point, he went back to the assumption underlying the whole dispute by raising the question "what is . . ." regarding the subject matter of the dispute and by answering it step by step; in this way the truth became manifest to the very contradictors. But when he discussed a subject on his own initiative, *i.e.* when he talked to people who merely listened, he proceeded through generally accepted opinions and thus produced agreement to an extraordinary degree. This latter kind of the art of conversation which leads to agreement, as distinguished from evident truth, is the art which Homer ascribed to the wily Odysseus by calling him "a safe speaker." It may seem strange that Socrates treated the contradictors better than the docile people. The strangeness is removed by another report of Xenophon. Socrates, we are told, did not approach all men in the same manner. He approached differently the men possessing good natures by whom he was naturally attracted on the one hand, and the various types of men lacking good natures on the other. The men possessing good natures are the gifted ones: those who are quick to learn, have a good memory and are desirous for all worthwhile subjects of learning. It would not be strange if Socrates had tried to lead those who are able to think toward the truth and to lead the others toward agreement in salutary opinions or to

⁴ *Phaedrus* 275d4-276a7 and 264b7-c5.

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confirm them in such opinions. Xenophon's Socrates engaged in his most blissful work only with his friends or rather his "good friends." For, as Plato's Socrates says, it is safe to say the truth among sensible friends.⁸ If we connect this information with the information derived from the *Phaedrus*, we reach this conclusion: the proper work of a writing is truly to talk, or to reveal the truth, to some while leading others to salutary opinions; the proper work of a writing is to arouse to thinking those who are by nature fit for it; the good writing achieves its end if the reader considers carefully the "logographic necessity" of every part, however small or seemingly insignificant, of the writing.

But "good writing" is only the genus of which the Platonic dialogue is a species. The model for the good writing is the good conversation. But there is this essential difference between any book and any conversation: in a book the author addresses many men wholly unknown to him, whereas in a conversation the speaker addresses one or more men whom he knows more or less well. If the good writing must imitate the good conversation, it would seem that it must be addressed primarily to one or more men known to the author; the primary addressee would then act as a representative of that type of reader whom the author wishes to reach above all. It is not necessary that that type should consist of the men possessing the best natures. The Platonic dialogue presents a conversation in which a man converses with one or more men more or less well known to him and in which he can therefore adapt what he says to the abilities, the characters, and even the moods of his interlocutors. But the Platonic dialogue is distinguished from the conversation which it presents by the fact that it makes accessible that conversation to a multitude wholly unknown to Plato and never addressed by Plato himself. On the other hand the Platonic dialogue shows us much more clearly than an Epistle Dedicatory could, in what manner the teaching conveyed through the work is adapted by the main speaker to his particular audience and therewith how that teaching would have to be restated in order to be valid beyond the particular situation of the conversation in question. For in no Platonic dialogue do the men who converse with the main speaker possess the perfection of the best nature. This is one reason why Plato employs a

⁸ *Memorabilia* I 6.14, IV 1.2-2.1; cf. IV 6.13-15 with *Symposium* 4.56-60; Plato, *Republic* 450d10-e1.

variety of spokesmen: by failing to present a conversation between Socrates and the Eleatic stranger or Timaeus, he indicates that there is no Platonic dialogue among men who are, or could be thought to be, equals.

One could reject the preceding observations on the ground that they too are based chiefly and at best on what Platonic characters say and not on what Plato himself says. Let us then return once more to the surface. Let us abandon every pretense to know. Let us admit that the Platonic dialogue is an enigma—something perplexing and to be wondered at. The Platonic dialogue is one big question mark. A question mark in white chalk on a blackboard is wholly unrevealing. Two such question marks would tell us something; they would draw our attention to the number 2. The number of dialogues which has come down to us as Platonic is 35. Some of them are at present generally regarded as spurious; but the *atheteses* ultimately rest on the belief that we know what Plato taught or thought or what he could possibly have written or that we have exhausted his possibilities. At any rate, we are confronted with many individuals of the same kind: we can compare; we can note similarities and dissimilarities; we can divide the genus "Platonic dialogue" into species; we can reason. Let us regard the 35 dialogues as individuals of one species of strange things, of strange animals. Let us proceed like zoologists. Let us start by classifying those individuals and see whether we do not hear Plato himself, as distinguished from his characters, speak through the surface of the surface of his work. Even if we make the most unintelligent assumption which, as it happens, is the most cautious assumption, that for all we know the Platonic dialogues might be verbatim reports of conversations, the selection of these particular 35 conversations would still be the work of Plato; for Socrates must have had more conversations known to Plato than there are Platonic dialogues presenting Socratic conversations: Socrates must have had some conversations with Plato himself, and there is no Platonic dialogue in which Socrates converses with Plato.⁶

While everything said in the Platonic dialogues is said by Plato's characters, Plato himself takes full responsibility for the titles of the dialogues. There are only four dialogues whose titles designate the subject matter: the *Republic*, the *Laws*, the *Sophist*, and the *States-*

⁶ Consider *Republic* 505a2-3.

man. There is no Platonic *Nature* or *Truth*. The subject matter of the dialogues as it is revealed by the titles is preponderantly political. This suggestion is strengthened by the observation that according to Plato's Socrates the greatest sophist is the political multitude.⁷ There are 25 dialogues whose titles designate the name of a human being who in one way or another participates in the conversation recorded in the dialogue in question; that human being is invariably a male contemporary of Socrates; in these cases the titles are as unrevealing or almost as unrevealing as regards the subject matter of the dialogues in question as the titles of *Anna Karenina* or *Madame Bovary*. Only in three cases (*Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Parmenides*) does the title clearly designate the chief character of the dialogue concerned. In two cases (*Hipparchus* and *Minos*) the title consists of the name, not of a participant, but of a man of the past who is only spoken about in the dialogue; these titles remind of the titles of tragedies. The name of Socrates occurs only in the title *Apology of Socrates*. One may say that seven titles indicate the theme of the dialogues concerned: *Republic*, *Laws*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Hipparchus*, *Minos*, and *Apology of Socrates*; the theme of the dialogues, in so far as it is revealed by the titles, is preponderantly political.

The fact that the name of Socrates occurs in no title except that of the *Apology of Socrates* is hardly an accident. Xenophon devoted four writings to Socrates; he too mentions the name of Socrates in no title except that of his *Apology of Socrates*; his most extensive writing devoted to Socrates is called *Recollections* and not, as one would expect from its content, *Recollections of Socrates*; Xenophon, just as Plato, deliberately refrained from mentioning Socrates in a title except when conjoined with "apology." Plato's *Apology of Socrates* presents Socrates' official and solemn account of his way of life, the account which he gave to the city of Athens when he was compelled to defend himself against the accusation of having committed a capital crime. Socrates calls this account a conversation.⁸ It is his only conversation with the city of Athens, and it is not more than an incipient conversation: it is rather one-sided. In this official account Socrates speaks at some length of the kind of people with whom he was in the habit of having conversations. It appears that he conversed with many Athenian citizens in public, in the market

⁷ *Republic* 492a8-494a6.

⁸ 37a6-7; cf. 39e1-5 and *Gorgias* 455a2-6.

at the tables of the money-changers. His peculiar "business" which made him suspect to his fellow citizens consisted in examining them with regard to their claim to be wise. He examined all who were supposed to possess some knowledge. But he mentions in his detailed statement only three kinds of such men: the politicians, the poets, and the craftsmen. It is true that in a brief repetition he adds the orators to the three classes mentioned before and shortly before the repetition he says that he examined whichever Athenian or stranger he believed to be wise.⁹ But it cannot be denied that according to the suggestions of the *Apology of Socrates* one would expect to find more Platonic dialogues presenting Socratic conversations with Athenian common men and in particular with Athenian politicians, craftsmen, and poets than Platonic dialogues presenting Socratic conversations with foreign sophists, rhetoricians, and the like. The Platonic Socrates is famous or ridiculed for speaking about shoemakers and the like; but we never see or hear him speak to shoemakers or the like. He converses in deed (as distinguished from his self-presentation in his sole public speech) only with people who are not common people—who belong in one way or the other to an elite, although never, or almost never, to the elite in the highest sense. Xenophon devotes a whole chapter of the *Memorabilia*, although only one chapter, to showing how useful Socrates was to craftsmen when he happened to converse with such people. In the chapter following, Xenophon records a conversation between Socrates and a beautiful woman of easy manners who was visiting Athens.¹⁰ In the Platonic dialogues we find two Socratic reports about conversations which he had with famous women (Diotima and Aspasia) but on the stage we see and hear only one woman, and her only once: his wife Xanthippe. Above all, Plato presents no Socratic conversation between Socrates and men of the *demos*, and in particular craftsmen; he presents only one Socratic conversation with poets and very few with Athenian citizens who were actual or retired politicians at the time of the conversation, as distinguished from young men of promise. It is above all through this selection of conversations, apart from the titles, that we hear Plato himself as distinguished from his characters.

⁹ Cf. 17c8-9, 19d2-3, 21e6-22a1 (and context) with 23b5-6 and 23e3-24a1.

¹⁰ III 10-11.

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The division of the Platonic dialogues which comes next in obviousness is that between performed dialogues of which there are 26, and narrated dialogues of which there are 9. The narrated dialogues are narrated either by Socrates (6) or by someone else mentioned by name (3) and they are narrated either to a named man (2) or to a nameless companion (2) or to an indeterminate audience (5). Plato is mentioned as present in the *Apology of Socrates* which is a performed dialogue and as absent in the *Phaedo* which is a narrated dialogue. One cannot infer from this that Plato must be thought to have been present at all performed dialogues and absent from all narrated dialogues. One must rather say that Plato speaks to us directly, without the intermediacy of his characters, also by the fact that he presented most of the dialogues as performed and the others as narrated. Each of these two forms has its peculiar advantages. The performed dialogue is not encumbered by the innumerable repetitions of "he said" and "I said." In the narrated dialogue on the other hand a participant in the conversation gives an account directly or indirectly to nonparticipants and hence also to us, while in the performed dialogue there is no bridge between the characters of the dialogue and the reader; in a narrated dialogue Socrates may tell us things which he could not tell with propriety to his interlocutors, for instance why he made a certain move in the conversation or what he thought of his interlocutors; he thus can reveal to us some of his secrets. Plato himself does not tell us what he means by his division of his dialogues into performed and narrated ones and why any particular dialogue is either narrated or performed. But he permits us a glimpse into his workshop by making us the witnesses of the transformation of a narrated dialogue into a performed one. Socrates had narrated his conversation with Theaetetus to the Megarian Euclides; Euclides, who apparently did not have as good a memory as some other Platonic characters, had written down what he had heard from Socrates, not indeed verbatim as Socrates had narrated it, but "omitting . . . the narratives between the speeches" like Socrates' saying "I said" and "Theaetetus agreed";¹¹ Euclides had transformed a narrated dialogue into a performed dialogue. The expressions used by Euclides are used by Socrates in the *Republic*. As he makes clear there at great length, if a writer speaks only as if he were one or the other of his characters, i.e. if he "omits"

¹¹ *Theaetetus* 142c8-143c5.

"what is between the speeches" of the characters (the "a said"'s and "b replied"'s), the writer conceals himself completely, and his writings are dramas.¹² It is clear that the writer conceals himself completely also when he does not "omit what is between the speeches" but entrusts the narrative to one of his characters. According to Plato's Socrates, we would then have to say that Plato conceals himself completely in his dialogues. This does not mean that Plato conceals his name; it was always known that Plato was the author of the Platonic dialogues. It means that Plato conceals his opinions. We may draw the further conclusion that the Platonic dialogues are dramas, if dramas in prose. They must then be read like dramas. We cannot ascribe to Plato any utterance of any of his characters without having taken great precautions. To illustrate this by our example, in order to know what Shakespeare, in contradistinction to his Macbeth, thinks about life, one must consider Macbeth's utterance in the light of the play as a whole; we might thus find that according to the play as a whole, life is not senseless simply, but becomes senseless for him who violates the sacred law of life, or the sacred order restores itself, or the violation of the law of life is self-destructive; but since that self-destruction is exhibited in the case of Macbeth, a human being of a particular kind, one would have to wonder whether the apparent lesson of the play is true of all men or universally; one would have to consider whether what appears to be a natural law is in fact a natural law, given the fact that Macbeth's violation of the law of life is at least partly originated by preternatural beings. In the same way we must understand the "speeches" of all Platonic characters in the light of the "deeds." The "deeds" are in the first place the setting and the action of the individual dialogue: on what kind of men does Socrates act with his speeches? what is the age, the character, the abilities, the position in society, and the appearance of each? when and where does the action take place? does Socrates achieve what he intends? is his action voluntary or imposed on him? Perhaps Socrates does not primarily intend to teach a doctrine but rather to educate human beings—to make them better, more just or gentle, more aware of their limitations. For before men can genuinely listen to a teaching, they must be willing to do so; they must have become aware of their need to listen; they must be liberated from the charms

¹² *Republic* 392c1–394c6.

which make them obtuse; this liberation is achieved less by speech than by silence and deed—by the silent action of Socrates which is not identical with his speech. But the “deeds” also include the relevant “facts” which are not mentioned in the “speeches” and yet were known to Socrates or to Plato; a given Socratic speech which persuades his audience entirely may not be in accordance with the “facts” known to Socrates. We are guided to those “facts” partly by the unthematic details and partly by seemingly casual remarks. It is relatively easy to understand the speeches of the characters: everyone who listens or reads perceives them. But to perceive what in a sense is not said, to perceive how what is said is said, is more difficult. The speeches deal with something general or universal (e.g. with justice), but they are made in a particular or individual setting; these and those human beings converse there and then about the universal subject; to understand the speeches in the light of the deeds means to see how the philosophic treatment of the philosophic theme is modified by the particular or individual or transformed into a rhetorical or poetic treatment or to recover the implicit philosophic treatment from the explicit rhetorical or poetic treatment. Differently stated, by understanding the speeches in the light of the deeds, one transforms the two-dimensional into something three-dimensional or rather one restores the original three-dimensionality. In a word, one cannot take seriously enough the law of logographic necessity. Nothing is accidental in a Platonic dialogue; everything is necessary at the place where it occurs. Everything which would be accidental outside of the dialogue becomes meaningful within the dialogue. In all actual conversations chance plays a considerable role: all Platonic dialogues are radically fictitious. The Platonic dialogue is based on a fundamental falsehood, a beautiful or beautifying falsehood, viz. on the denial of chance.

When Socrates explains in the *Republic* what a drama in contradistinction to other poetry is, the austere Adeimantus thinks only of tragedy. In the same way the austere reader of the Platonic dialogues—and the first thing which Plato does to his readers is to make them austere—understands the Platonic dialogue as a new kind of tragedy, perhaps as the finest and best kind. Yet Socrates adds to Adeimantus' mention of tragedy the words “and comedy.”¹³ At this point we are compelled to have recourse, not only to an author other

¹³ *Republic* 394b8-c2.

than Plato but to an author whom Plato could not have known since he lived many centuries after Plato's death. The reason is this. We have access to Plato primarily only through the Platonic tradition, for it is that tradition to which we owe the interpretations, translations, and editions. The Platonic tradition has been for many centuries a tradition of Christian Platonism. The blessings which we owe to that tradition must not blind us however to the fact that there is a difference between Christian and primitive Platonism. It is not surprising that perhaps the greatest helper in the effort to see that difference should be a Christian saint. I have in mind Sir Thomas More. His *Utopia* is a free imitation of Plato's *Republic*. More's perfect commonwealth is much less austere than Plato's. Since More understood very well the relation between speeches and deeds, he expressed the difference between his perfect commonwealth and Plato's by having his perfect commonwealth expounded after dinner, whereas the exposition of Plato's commonwealth takes the place of a dinner. In the thirteenth chapter of his *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* More says: "And for to prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather the time of weeping, we find that our saviour himself wept twice or thrice, but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear that he never did, but at the least wise he left us no example of it. But, on the other side, he left us example of weeping." More must have known that exactly the opposite is true of Plato's—or Xenophon's—Socrates: Socrates left us no example of weeping, but, on the other side, he left us example of laughing.¹⁴ The relation of weeping and laughing is similar to that of tragedy and comedy. We may therefore say that the Socratic conversation and hence the Platonic dialogue is slightly more akin to comedy than to tragedy. This kinship is noticeable also in Plato's *Republic* which is manifestly akin to Aristophanes' *Assembly of Women*.¹⁵

Plato's work consists of many dialogues because it imitates the manyness, the variety, the heterogeneity of being. The many dia-

¹⁴ *Phaedo* 115c5; Xenophon, *Apology of Socrates* 28.

¹⁵ Cf. *Assembly of Women* 558–567, 590–591, 594–598, 606, 611–614, 635–643, 655–661, 673–674, and 1029 with *Republic* 442d10–443a7, 416d3–5, 417a6–7, 464b8–c3, 372b–c, 420a4–5, 457c10–d3, 461c8–d2, 465b1–4, 464d7–e7, 416d6–7, 493d6. Cf. *Republic* 451c2 with *Thesmophoriazusae* 151, 452b6–c2 with *Lysistrata* 676–678, and 473d5 with *Lysistrata* 772. Consider also 420e1–421b3.

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logues form a *kosmos* which mysteriously imitates the mysterious *kosmos*. The Platonic *kosmos* imitates or reproduces its model in order to awaken us to the mystery of the model and to assist us in articulating that mystery. There are many dialogues because the whole consists of many parts. But the individual dialogue is not a chapter from an encyclopaedia of the philosophic sciences or from a system of philosophy, and still less a relic of a stage of Plato's development. Each dialogue deals with one part; it reveals the truth about that part. But the truth about a part is a partial truth, a half truth. Each dialogue, we venture to say, abstracts from something that is most important to the subject matter of the dialogue. If this is so, the subject matter as presented in the dialogue is strictly speaking impossible. But the impossible—or a certain kind of the impossible—if treated as possible is in the highest sense ridiculous or, as we are in the habit of saying, comical. The core of every Aristophanean comedy is something impossible of the kind indicated. The Platonic dialogue brings to its completion what could be thought to have been completed by Aristophanes.—

The *Republic*, the most famous political work of Plato, the most famous political work of all times, is a narrated dialogue whose theme is justice. While the place of the conversation is made quite clear to us, the time, *i.e.* the year, is not. We lack therefore certain knowledge of the political circumstances in which the conversation about the political principle took place. Yet we are not left entirely in the dark on this point. In the *Republic* Socrates tells the story of a descent. The day before, he had gone down from Athens in the company of Glaucon to the Piraeus, the seat of Athenian naval and commercial power, the stronghold of the democracy. He had not gone down to the Piraeus in order to have a conversation there about justice but in order to pray to the goddess—perhaps a goddess new and strange to Athens—and at the same time because he was desirous to look at a novel festival which included not only an indigenous but also a foreign procession. When hurrying back to town he and his companion are detained by some acquaintances who induce them to go with them to the house of one of them, a wealthy metic, from which they are supposed to go, after dining, to look at a novel torchrace in honor of the goddess as well as at a night festival. In that house they meet some other men. The *synontes* (those who are together with Socrates on the occasion and are mentioned by name) are altogether ten, only five of

whom are Athenians whereas four are metics and one a famous foreign teacher of rhetoric. (Only six of the ten participate in the conversation.) We are clearly at the opposite pole from Old Athens, from the ancestral polity, the Athens of the Marathon-fighters. We breathe the air of the new and the strange—of decay. At any rate Socrates and his chief interlocutors, Glaucon and Adeimantus, prove to be greatly concerned with that decay and to think of the restoration of political health. The harshest possible indictment of the reigning democracy, the novel polity favoring novelty, which was ever uttered is uttered in the *Republic* without a voice being raised in its defense. Besides, Socrates makes very radical proposals of reform without encountering serious resistance. Some years after the conversation, men linked to Socrates and Plato by kinship or friendship attempted a political restoration, putting down the democracy and restoring an aristocratic regime dedicated to virtue and justice. Among other things they established an authority called the Ten in the Piraeus. Yet the characters of the *Republic* are different from these statesmen. Some of the characters of the *Republic* (Polemarchus, Lysias, and Niceratus) were mere victims of the latter, of the so-called Thirty Tyrants. The situation resembles that in the *Laches* where Socrates discusses courage with generals defeated or about to be defeated and in the *Charmides* where he discusses moderation with future tyrants; in the *Republic* he discusses justice in the presence of victims of an abortive attempt made by most unjust men to restore justice.¹⁶ We are thus prepared for the possibility that the restoration attempted in the *Republic* will not take place on the political plane.

The character of the Socratic restoration begins to reveal itself by the action preceding the conversation. The conversation about justice is not altogether voluntary. When Socrates and Glaucon hasten homeward, Polemarchus (the War Lord), seeing them from afar, orders his slave to run after them and to order them to wait for him. Not Socrates but Glaucon answers the slave that they will wait. A little later Polemarchus appears in the company of Adeiman-

¹⁶ Lysias, *Against Eratosthenes* 4-23; Xenophon, *Hellenica* II 3.39, 4.19, 38; Plato, *Seventh Letter* 324c5; Aristotle, *Politics* 1303b10-12 and *Constitution of the Athenians* 35.1. The Archon Polemarchus was the Athenian magistrate in charge of lawsuits in which metics were involved (Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians* 68).

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tus, Niceratus and some others not mentioned by name; the name of Adeimantus, the most important man in this group, is put in the center as is meet. Polemarchus, pointing to the numerical and hence brachial superiority of his group, demands of Socrates and Glaucon that they stay in the Piraeus. Socrates replies that they might prevent the coercion by persuasion. Yet, Polemarchus replies, he and his group could make themselves immune to persuasion by refusing to listen. Thereupon Glaucon, and not Socrates, cedes to force. Fortunately, before Socrates too might be compelled to cede to force, Adeimantus begins to use persuasion; he promises Socrates and Glaucon a novel spectacle if they stay: a torchrace on horseback in honor of the goddess which is so exciting not because of the goddess but because of the horses. Polemarchus following Adeimantus promises yet another sight for the time after dinner and still another attraction. Thereupon Glaucon, and not Socrates, makes the decision, his third decision: "it seems as if we should have to stay." The vote is now almost unanimous in favor of Socrates' and Glaucon's staying in the Piraeus: Socrates has no choice but to abide by the decision of the overwhelming majority. Ballots have taken the place of bullets: ballots are convincing only as long as bullets are remembered. We owe then the conversation on justice to a mixture of compulsion and persuasion. To cede to such a mixture, or to a kind of such a mixture, is an act of justice. Justice itself, duty, obligation, is a kind of mixture of compulsion and persuasion, of coercion and reason.

Yet the initiative soon passes to Socrates. Owing to his initiative, all sight-seeing and even the dinner are completely forgotten in favor of the conversation about justice, which must have lasted from the afternoon until the next morning. Especially the central part of the conversation must have taken place without the benefit of the natural light of the sun and perhaps in artificial light (cf. the beginning of the fifth book). The action of the *Republic* thus proves to be an act of moderation, of self-control regarding the pleasures, and even the needs, of the body and regarding the pleasures of seeing sights or of gratifying curiosity. This action too reveals the character of the Socratic restoration: the feeding of the body and of the senses is replaced by the feeding of the mind. Yet was it not the desire to see sights which had induced Socrates to go down to the Piraeus and hence, as it happened, to expose himself to the compulsion to stay in the Piraeus and thus to engage in the conversation about justice? Is Socrates punished by others or by himself for an

act of self-indulgence? Just as his staying in the Piraeus is due to a combination of compulsion and persuasion, his going down to the Piraeus was due to a combination of piety and curiosity. His descending to the Piraeus would seem to remain a mystery unless we assume that he was prompted by his piety as distinguished from any desire. Yet we must not forget that he descended together with Glaucon. We cannot exclude the possibility that he descended to the Piraeus for the sake of Glaucon and at the request of Glaucon. After all, all decisions made prior to the conversation in so far as we could observe them were made by Glaucon. Xenophon¹⁷ tells us that Socrates, being well-disposed toward Glaucon for the sake of Charmides and of Plato, cured him of his extreme political ambition. In order to achieve this cure he had first to make him willing to listen to him by gratifying him. Plato's Socrates may have descended to the Piraeus together with Glaucon who was eager to descend, in order to find an unobtrusive opportunity for curing him of his extreme political ambition. Certain it is that the *Republic* supplies the most magnificent cure ever devised for every form of political ambition.

At the beginning of the conversation, Cephalus, the aged father of Polemarchus and two other characters, occupies the center. He is the father in the full sense, one reason being that he is a man of wealth; wealth strengthens paternity. He stands for what seems to be the most natural authority. He possesses the dignity peculiar to old age and thus presents the order which is based on reverence for the old, the old order as opposed to the present decay. We can easily believe that the old order is superior even to any restoration. Although he is a lover of speeches, Cephalus leaves the conversation about justice when it has barely begun in order to perform an act of piety, and he never returns: his justice is not in need of speeches or reasons. After he has left, Socrates occupies the center. However lofty Cephalus' justice may be, it is animated by the traditional notion of justice, and that notion is radically deficient (366d-e). The old order is deficient, for it is the origin of the present disorder: Cephalus is the father of Polemarchus. And assuredly, the metic Cephalus is not the proper representative of the old order, of the old Athenian order. The good is not identical with the paternal or ancestral. Piety is replaced by philosophy.

Since the conversation about justice was not planned, one must

¹⁷ *Memorabilia* III 6.

see how it came about. The conversation opens with Socrates' addressing a question to Cephalus. The question is a model of propriety. It gives Cephalus an opportunity to speak of everything good which he possesses, to display his happiness as it were, and it concerns the only subject of a general character about which Socrates could conceivably learn something from him: how it feels to be very old. Socrates surely meets very rarely men of Cephalus' age (cf. *Apology of Socrates* 23c2) and when he does, they do not give him as good an opportunity to ask them this question as Cephalus does. Cephalus on the other hand converses ordinarily only with men of his own age and they ordinarily talk about old age. Disagreeing with most of his contemporaries, but agreeing with the aged poet Sophocles, he praises old age with special regard to the fact that old men are free from sexual desire, a raging and savage master. Obviously Cephalus, as distinguished from Socrates, had suffered greatly under that master when he was not yet very old; and, as distinguished from Sophocles, who had spoken so harshly about sexual desire when he was indelicately asked about his condition in this respect, he brings up this subject spontaneously when asked about old age in general (cf. already 328d2-4). The first point made by Socrates' first interlocutor in the *Republic* concerns the evils of *eros*. Old age is then worthy of praise since it brings freedom from sensual desires or since it brings moderation. But Cephalus corrects himself immediately: what is relevant for a man's well-being is not age but character; for men of good character, even old age is only moderately burdensome—which implies that old age is of course more burdensome than youth. One might think of the weakening of memory and of the sense of sight but Cephalus does not say a word about these infirmities. How his final judgment on old age can be true if sexual desire, that scourge of youth, is such a very great hardship, is not easy to see. No wonder that Socrates wonders at Cephalus' statement. Desiring that Cephalus should reveal himself more fully, Socrates mentions the possibility that Cephalus' bearing old age lightly is due, not to his good character, but to his great wealth. Cephalus does not deny that wealth is the necessary condition for bearing old age lightly (he thus unwittingly advises poor Socrates against becoming very old) but he denies that it is the sufficient condition: the most important condition is good character. Socrates gives Cephalus an occasion to speak of another facet of his moderation—a facet which did not have to wait for old

age to be brought out—his moderation regarding the acquisition of wealth; it becomes clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that Cephalus' moderation in this respect is genuine. Socrates has only one further question (his third and last question prior to the question regarding justice) to address to Cephalus: What in your opinion is the greatest good which you have enjoyed through your wealth? Cephalus himself does not regard his answer as very convincing. To appreciate it, one needs the experience of old age which apart from him no one else present has, or at least an equivalent experience (cf. *Phaedo* 64a4-6): one must be close to believing that one is going to die. Once one is in that state, one begins to fear that the stories told about the things in Hades might be true: that he who has acted unjustly here may have to undergo punishment there, and one begins to ask oneself whether one has not done injustice to anyone in anything. In this scrupulous search one may find that one has involuntarily cheated someone or lied to him or that one owes some sacrifices to a god or money to a human being. Only if one possesses wealth can one pay those debts while there is still time. This then is the greatest good which Cephalus enjoys from his wealth since he has begun to believe that he is going to die. We note that the last point, just as the first, deals with Cephalus' present state only: only the central point (his moderation regarding the acquisition of wealth) deals with the whole course of his life.

Cephalus' reply could have given occasion to more than one question: what was the greatest good which Cephalus enjoyed from his wealth when he was of middle age and when he was young? how trustworthy are the stories regarding punishment after death? is involuntary deception an unjust action? is a man as moderate as Cephalus in regard to wealth likely ever to have acted unjustly? Socrates raises none of these questions for they ultimately lead back to the question which he does raise: is the view of justice implied in Cephalus' reply correct? is justice simply identical with truthfulness and restoring what one has taken or received from someone? Socrates seems to narrow unduly the view of the pious merchant Cephalus who had spoken of paying what one owes to gods or men; Socrates seems to disregard entirely Cephalus' reference to sacrifices to the gods. Could he have thought that bringing sacrifices means to restore to the gods what one has received from them, since everything good we have we owe to the gods (379cff.)? One cannot say that the restoration takes place naturally, by our dying, for in that

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case Cephalus would have no reason to worry about his debt to the gods, to say nothing of the fact that Cephalus leaves everything he owns to his children; but this fact shows also that bringing sacrifices is not a special case of restoring what one has received or taken. Let us then assume that Socrates regards the bringing of sacrifices as an act of piety as distinguished from justice (cf. 331a4 with *Gorgias* 507b1-3) or that he limits the conversation to justice as distinguished from piety.

Socrates shows with ease that Cephalus' view of justice is untenable: a man who has taken or received a weapon from a sane man would act unjustly if he returned it to him when he asked for it after having become insane; in the same way one would act unjustly by being resolved to say nothing but the truth to a madman. Cephalus seems to be about to concede his defeat when his son and heir Polemarchus, acting as a dutiful son, rising in defense of his father, takes the place of his father in the conversation. But the opinion which he defends is not exactly the same as his father's; if we may make use of a joke of Socrates, Polemarchus inherits only a half, perhaps even less than a half, of his father's intellectual property. Polemarchus no longer maintains that saying the truth is unqualifiedly required by justice. Without knowing it, he thus lays down one of the principles of the teaching of the *Republic*. As appears later in the work, in a well-ordered society it is required that one tell untruths of a certain kind to children and even to the grown-up subjects. This example reveals the character of the discussions which occur in the first book of the *Republic*. There Socrates refutes a number of false opinions about justice. Yet this negative or destructive work contains within itself the positive or edifying assertions of the bulk of the work. Let us consider from this point of view the three opinions on justice discussed in the first book.

Cephalus' opinion, as taken up by Polemarchus after his father had left both piously and laughingly, is to the effect that justice consists in paying one's debts. Only Cephalus' particular preoccupation can justify this very particular view of justice. The complete view after which he gropes is none other than the one stated in the traditional definition of justice: justice consists in returning, leaving or giving to everyone what he is entitled to, what belongs to him.¹⁸ It is this view of justice with which Socrates takes issue in his dis-

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *S. th.* 2 2 q. 58. a. 1. Cf. Cicero, *Laws* I 19 and 45.

cussion with Cephalus. In his refutation he tacitly appeals to another view of justice tacitly held by Cephalus, *viz.* that justice is good, not only for the giver (who is rewarded for his justice) but also for the receiver. The two views of justice are not simply compatible. In some cases giving to a man what belongs to him is harmful to him. Not all men make a good or wise use of what belongs to them, of their property. If we judge very strictly, we might be driven to say that very few people make a wise use of their property. If justice is to be good or salutary, one might be compelled to demand that everyone own only what is "fitting" for him,¹⁹ what is good for him and for as long as it is good for him. We might be compelled to demand the abolition of private property or the introduction of communism. To the extent to which there is a connection between private property and the family, one would even be compelled to demand in addition the abolition of the family or the introduction of absolute communism, *i.e.* of communism regarding property, women, and children. Above all, very few people will be able to determine exactly what things and what amount of things are good for each individual, or at any rate for each individual who counts, to use; only men of exceptional wisdom are able to do this. We shall then be compelled to demand that society be ruled by simply wise men, by philosophers in the strict sense wielding absolute power. Socrates' refutation of Cephalus' view of justice contains then the proof of the necessity of absolute communism as well as of the absolute rule of philosophers. This proof, as is hardly necessary to say, is based on the disregard of, or the abstraction from, a number of most relevant things; it is "abstract" in the extreme. If one wishes to understand the *Republic*, one must try to find out what these disregarded things are and why they are disregarded. The *Republic* itself, properly read, supplies the answers to these questions.

Whereas the first opinion was only implied by Cephalus but stated by Socrates (and even by him only partly), the second opinion is stated by Polemarchus, although not without Socrates' assistance. To begin with, Polemarchus' thesis presents itself as identical with Cephalus' thesis: undeterred by Socrates' refutation, he appropriates his father's thesis while his father is still present, bolstering it by an additional authority, that of the poet Simonides. Only after

¹⁹ Cf. 332c2 and Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* I 3.17.

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Cephalus has left and Socrates has repeated the refutation of Cephalus' thesis does Polemarchus admit that the first opinion about justice is wrong and that Simonides' opinion differs from Cephalus' opinion: Simonides' opinion is not exposed to Socrates' powerful objection. Simonides' thesis as Polemarchus understands it is to the effect that justice consists, not in giving to everyone what belongs to him, but in giving to everyone what is good for him. More precisely, remembering that Socrates in refuting Cephalus' view had spoken of what belongs to a friend (331c6), Polemarchus says in the name of Simonides that justice consists in doing good to one's friends. Only when Socrates asks him about what justice requires in regard to enemies does he say that justice also requires that one harm one's enemies. The view according to which justice consists in helping one's friends and harming one's enemies is the only one of the three views discussed in the first book of the *Republic* of which the discussion may be said to begin and to end with a Socratic praise of the poets as wise men. It is also according to the Clitophon (410a6-b1)—the dialogue preceding the *Republic* in the traditional order of Plato's works—the only view of justice which is Socrates' own. Justice thus understood is obviously good, not only to those receivers who are good to the giver but for this very reason to the giver as well; it does not need to be supported by divine rewards and punishments, as does justice as understood by Cephalus; divine retribution is therefore dropped by Polemarchus who is followed therein by Thrasymachus. Yet Polemarchus' view is exposed to difficulties of its own. The difficulty is not that justice understood in Polemarchus' sense, as giving tit for tat, is merely reactive or does not cover the actions by which one originally acquires friends or enemies, for justice however understood presupposes things which in themselves are neither just nor unjust. One might say for instance that every human being has friends from the moment of his birth, namely his parents (330c4-6), and therewith enemies, namely the enemies of his family: to be a human being means to have friends and enemies. The difficulty is rather this. If justice is taken to be giving to others what belongs to them, the only thing which the just man must know is what belongs to anyone with whom he has any dealings or perhaps only what does and what does not belong to himself. This knowledge is supplied by law, which in principle can be known easily by everybody through mere listening. But if justice is giving to one's friends what is good for them, the just

man himself must judge; he himself must know what is good for each of his friends; he himself must be able to distinguish correctly his friends from his enemies. Justice must include knowledge of a high order. To say the least, justice must be an art comparable to medicine, the art by virtue of which one knows and produces what is good for human bodies and therefore also knows and produces what is bad for them. This means however that the man who is best at healing his sick friends and poisoning his enemies is not the just man but the physician; yet the physician is also best at poisoning his friends. Confronted with these difficulties Polemarchus is unable to identify the knowledge or art which goes with justice or which is justice. His refutation takes place in three stages. In the central stage Socrates points out to him the difficulty of knowing one's friends and one's enemies. One may erroneously believe that someone is one's friend or that one has been benefited by him; by benefiting him one might in fact help an enemy. One might also harm a man who does not hurt anyone, a just or good man. It seems then better to say that justice consists in helping the just and in harming the unjust, or, since there is no reason to help a man who is not likely ever to help oneself and to harm a man who may have harmed others but is not likely to harm oneself, that justice consists in helping good men if they are one's friends²⁰ and in harming bad men if they are one's enemies. It is obvious that justice understood as helping men who help oneself is advantageous to both parties. But is it advantageous to harm those who have harmed one? This question is taken up by Socrates in the third stage of his conversation with Polemarchus. Harming human beings, just as harming dogs and horses, makes them worse. A sensible or just man will then not harm any human being, as little as a horse or a dog (cf. *Apology of Socrates* 25c3-e3 and *Euthyphro* 13a12-c3). In this stage Socrates makes use of the premise that justice is an art, a premise which is discussed in the first stage but absent from the second stage.

Polemarchus, we recall, was supposed to say which art justice is. Since justice is concerned with friends and enemies, it must be something like the art of war (332e4-6): justice is the art which enables men to become a fighting team each member of which helps every other so that they can jointly defeat their enemies and inflict on them any harm they deem good. Yet Socrates induces Pole-

²⁰ Cf. 450d10-e1 with *Gorgias* 487a.

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marchus to grant that justice is useful also in peace, in peaceful exchange, in matters of money, but not indeed regarding the use of money but regarding the safekeeping of money or of other things; justice will then be the art of safekeeping; but that art proves to be identical with the art of stealing: the knowledge required for safekeeping is identical with the knowledge required for stealing; the just man thus proves to be identical with the thief, *i.e.* with a manifestly unjust man. The argument refutes, not Polemarchus' thesis but the assumption that justice is an art; the identity of the honest guard and the thief follows necessarily if one considers only the knowledge, the intellectual part, of their work, and not their opposite moral intentions. Yet Polemarchus' thesis was altogether amoral—this was also the reason why he had not provided for the difference between the genuine friends and the merely seeming friends; therefore he gets what he deserves. The difficulty did not exist for his father in whose view justice was linked to the gods who know everything. This explanation is however not sufficient, for Socrates does not know of moral virtue as such: virtue is knowledge. In other words, one must raise the question: what is the intention or the will as distinguished from knowledge? is not a good intention based on a knowledge absent from the bad intention? is it not possible that the good intention is identical with knowledge of a certain kind? The good intention is based on an opinion absent from the bad intention. But every opinion on a subject seems to point toward knowledge of that subject. Prior to investigation we cannot even know whether justice is not an art comparable to the art of medicine, namely, the medicine of the soul or philosophy. Polemarchus' first mistake in the conversation was his failure to stick to the identification of justice with the art of war: justice in "peace" is the allied individuals' conduct toward neutrals; there is never simply peace. Secondly, Socrates' refutation of Polemarchus is valid only on the premise that justice and stealing are incompatible, but at least the compatibility of justice with lying had been established in the conversation with his father, and the Greek word for stealing can also mean cheating and to do anything stealthily. But by far the most important point is the fact that the complete refutation of Polemarchus' thesis culminates in the thesis that justice consists in helping the good men who are one's friends and in not harming anybody: it does not culminate in the thesis that justice consists in helping everyone, and not even in the thesis that it consists in help-

ing all good men.²¹ Justice is not beneficence. Perhaps Socrates means that there are human beings whom he cannot benefit: regarding fools only negative justice (abstention from harming them) is possible; justice consists in helping the wise and in harming no one. Remembering that according to Polemarchus' original claim his thesis is identical with his father's, one might say that justice consists in helping the wise by saying the truth and giving to them what belongs to them and in failing to do these things to the fools, to the madmen. However this may be, Socrates surely means also something much more immediately important. Polemarchus' thesis reflects the most potent opinion regarding justice—the opinion according to which justice means public-spiritedness or concern with the common good, full dedication to one's city as a particular city which as such is potentially the enemy of other cities, or patriotism. Justice thus understood consists indeed in helping one's friends, *i.e.* one's fellow citizens, and in hating one's enemies, *i.e.* the foreigners. Justice thus understood cannot be dispensed with in any city however just, for even the justest city is a city, a particular or closed or exclusive society. Therefore Socrates himself demands later on (375b–376e) that the guardians of the city be by nature friendly to their own people and harsh or nasty to strangers. He also demands that the non-austere poets, a great evil for the city, be sent away to other cities (398a5–b1). Above all, he demands that the citizens of the just city cease to regard all human beings as their brothers and limit the feelings and actions of fraternity to their fellow citizens alone (414d–e). Polemarchus' opinion properly understood is the only one among the generally known views of justice discussed in the first book of the *Republic* which is entirely preserved in the positive or constructive part of the work. This opinion, to repeat, is to the effect that justice is full dedication to the common good; it demands that one withhold nothing of his own from his city; it demands therefore by itself absolute communism.

The third and last opinion discussed in the first book of the *Republic* is the one maintained by Thrasymachus. The discussion with him forms by far the largest part of the first book, although not its central part. In a sense, however, it forms the center of the *Republic* as a whole, namely, if one divides the work in accordance with the change of Socrates' interlocutors: (1) Cephalus-Polemarchus

²¹ Cf. Cicero, *Republic* I 28. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV 8.11 and I 6.5.

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(father and son), (2) Thrasymachus, (3) Glaucon and Adeimantus (brother and brother); Thrasymachus stands alone as Socrates does but his aloneness resembles rather that of the impious Cyclops. Thrasymachus is the only speaker in the work who exhibits anger and behaves discourteously and even savagely: his entry into the debate is compared by so gentle a man as Socrates to a wild beast's hurling itself upon him and Polemarchus as if he were about to tear them to pieces—one might say, Thrasymachus behaves like a graceless hater of speeches whose only weapon is force and savagery (336b5-6; cf. 411e1 and context). It seems to be entirely fitting that the most savage man present should maintain the most savage thesis on justice. Thrasymachus contends that justice is the advantage of the stronger, that it is the other fellow's good, *i.e.* good only for the receiver and bad for the giver; so far from being an art, it is folly; accordingly he praises injustice. He is lawless and shameless in deed and in speech; he blushes only on account of the heat. And, needless at it may be to say so, he is greedy for money and prestige. One might say that he is Plato's version of the Unjust Speech in contrast to Socrates as his version of the Just Speech, with the understanding that whereas in the *Clouds* the Unjust Speech is victorious in speech, in the *Republic* the Just Speech is victorious in speech. One may go so far as to say that Thrasymachus presents Injustice incarnate, the tyrant, provided one is willing to admit that Polemarchus presents the democrat (327c7) and Cephalus the oligarch. But then one would have to explain why a tyrant should be as eager as Thrasymachus is to teach the principles of tyranny and thus to breed competitors for himself. In addition, if one contrasts the beginning of the Thrasymachus-section with its end (354a12-13), one observes that Socrates succeeds in taming Thrasymachus: Socrates could not have tamed Critias. But tameness is akin to justice (486b10-12): Socrates succeeds in making Thrasymachus somewhat just. He thus lays the foundation for his friendship with Thrasymachus, a friendship never preceded by enmity (498c9-d1). Plato makes it very easy for us to loathe Thrasymachus: for all ordinary purposes we ought to loathe people who act and speak like Thrasymachus and never to imitate their deeds and never to act according to their speeches. But there are other purposes to be considered. At any rate it is most important for the understanding of the *Republic* and generally that we should not behave toward Thrasymachus as Thrasymachus behaves, *i.e.* angrily, fanatically, or savagely.

If we look then without indignation at Thrasymachus' indignation, we must admit that his violent reaction to Socrates' conversation with Polemarchus is to some extent the reaction of common sense. That conversation led up to the assertion that it is not good for oneself to harm anyone or that justice is never harmful to anyone including oneself. Since the city as city is a society which from time to time must wage war, and war is inseparable from harming innocent people (471a-b), the unqualified condemnation of harming human beings is tantamount to the condemnation of even the justest city. This objection is indeed not raised by Thrasymachus but it is implied in his thesis. That thesis proves to be only the consequence of an opinion which is not only not manifestly savage but even highly respectable. When Thrasymachus has become dumbfounded for the first time by Socrates' reasoning, Polemarchus avails himself of this opportunity to express his agreement with Socrates most vigorously. Thereupon Clitophon, a companion of Thrasymachus just as Polemarchus is a companion of Socrates (cf. also 336b7 and 340c2), rises in defense of Thrasymachus. In this way there begins a short dialogue between Polemarchus and Clitophon, consisting altogether of seven speeches. In the center of this intermezzo we find Clitophon's statement that according to Thrasymachus justice consists in obeying the rulers. But to obey the rulers means in the first place to obey the laws laid down by the rulers (338d5-e6). Thrasymachus' thesis is then that justice consists in obeying the law or that the just is identical with the lawful or legal, or with what the customs or laws of the city prescribe. This thesis is the most obvious, the most natural, thesis regarding justice.²² It deserves to be noted that the most obvious view of justice is not explicitly mentioned, let alone discussed at all in the *Republic*. One may say that it is the thesis of the city itself: no city permits an appeal from its laws. For even if a city admits that there is a law higher than the law of the city, that higher law must be interpreted by properly constituted authority which is either instituted by the city or else constitutes a commonwealth comprising many cities in which commonwealth the just is again the legal. If the just is then identical with the legal, the source of justice is the will of the legislator. The legislator in each city is the regime: the tyrant, the common people, the men of excellence, and so on. Each regime lays down the laws

²² *Republic* 359a4; *Gorgias* 504d1-3; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV 4.1, 12; 6.5-6; Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1129a32-34.

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with a view to its own preservation and well-being, to its own advantage. From this it follows that obedience to the laws or justice is not necessarily to the advantage of those who do not belong to the regime or of the ruled but may be bad for them. One might think that the regime could lay down the laws with a view to the common good of the rulers and the ruled. That common good would be good intrinsically, not merely by virtue of enactment or agreement; it would be what is by nature just; it would be right independent of, and higher than, what the city declares to be right; justice would not then be primarily and essentially legality—contrary to the thesis of the city. Since the thesis of the city excludes then a natural common good, that thesis leads to the conclusion that justice or obedience to the laws is necessarily to the advantage of the ruled and bad for them. And as for the rulers, justice simply does not exist; they are "sovereign." Justice is bad because it does not aim at a natural good which can only be an individual's good. The understanding required for taking care of one's own good is prudence. Prudence requires either that one disobey the laws whenever one can escape punishment—to that extent prudence is in need of forensic rhetoric—or else that one become a tyrant since only the tyrant can pursue his own good without any regard whatever for others. Thrasymachus' thesis—the thesis of "legal positivism"—is nothing less than the thesis of the city which thesis destroys itself.

Let us now reconsider the first two opinions. According to Cephalus' opinion, justice consists in giving, leaving, or restoring to everyone what he is entitled to, what belongs to him. But what belongs to a man is determined by the law. Justice in Cephalus' sense is then only a subdivision of justice in Thrasymachus' sense. (In Aristotelian terms, particular justice is implied in universal justice.) The first and the third opinions on justice belong together. The law determining what belongs to a man may be unwise, *i.e.* it may assign to a man what is not good for him; only wisdom, as distinguished from law, fulfills the function of justice, *i.e.* of assigning to each what is truly good for him, what is good for him by nature. But is this view of justice compatible with society? Polemarchus' view of justice, which does not imply the necessity of law, takes care of this difficulty: justice consists in helping one's friends as fellow citizens, in dedicating oneself to the common good. But is this view of justice compatible with concern for the natural good of

each? The positive part of the *Republic* will have to show whether or how the two conflicting views of justice—which are reflected in the two views that justice is legality or law-abidingness²³ and that justice is dedication to the city—can be reconciled. Here we merely note that Polemarchus who had eventually abandoned his father's thesis also turns against Thrasymachus: on the primary level Polemarchus and Socrates belong together as defenders of the common good.

The brief dialogue between Polemarchus and Clitophon shows that the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus, or at any rate its initial part, has the character of a lawsuit. The defendant is Socrates: Thrasymachus accuses Socrates of wrongdoing. It is a demand of justice that "the other party," i.e. Thrasymachus, also receive a fair hearing. Everyone listens to what Socrates tells us about Thrasymachus. But we must also pay attention to what Thrasymachus thinks of Socrates. Socrates thinks that Thrasymachus behaves like a wild beast; Socrates is entirely innocent and on the defensive. Thrasymachus has met Socrates before. His present exasperation is prepared by his experience in his earlier meeting or meetings with Socrates. He is sure that Socrates is ironic, i.e. a dissembler, a man who pretends to be ignorant while in fact he knows things very well; far from being ignorant and innocent he is clever and tricky; and he is ungrateful. The immoral Thrasymachus is morally indignant whereas moral Socrates is, or pretends to be, merely afraid. At any rate, after Thrasymachus' initial outburst Socrates offers an apology for any mistake he and Polemarchus may have committed. Thrasymachus in his turn behaves not merely like an accuser but like a man of the highest authority. He simply forbids Socrates to give certain answers to his questions. At a given moment he asks Socrates: "what in your estimate should be done to you?" The penalty which Socrates thereupon proposes is in fact a gain, a reward, for him. Thereupon Thrasymachus demands that Socrates should pay him money. When Socrates replies that he has no money, Glaucon steps forth and declares that "all of us will contribute for Socrates." The situation strikingly resembles the one on Socrates' day in court when he was accused by the city of Athens of having given a "forbidden answer"—an answer forbidden by the

²³ For the understanding of the connection between "law" and "the good of the individual," cf. *Minos* 317d3ff.

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city of Athens—and when Glaucon's brother Plato among others vouched for a fine to be paid by Socrates. Thrasymachus acts like the city, he resembles the city, and this means according to a way of reasoning acceptable to both Socrates and Thrasymachus (350c7–8), Thrasymachus is the city. It is because he is the city that he maintains the thesis of the city regarding justice and that he is angry at Socrates for his implicit antagonism to the thesis of the city. But obviously Thrasymachus is not the city. He is only a caricature of the city, a distorted image of the city, a kind of imitation of the city: he imitates the city; he plays the city. He can play the city because he has something in common with the city. Being a rhetorician, he resembles the sophist, and the sophist *par excellence* is the city (492aff.; *Gorgias* 465c4–5). Thrasymachus' rhetoric was especially concerned with both arousing and appeasing the angry passions of the multitude, with both attacking a man's character and counteracting such attacks, as well as with play-acting as an ingredient of oratory.²⁴ When making his appearance in the *Republic*, Thrasymachus plays the angry city. It will become clear later in the *Republic* that anger is no mean part of the city.

That Thrasymachus' anger or spiritedness is not the core of his being but subordinate to his art becomes clear as his conversation with Socrates proceeds. Socrates draws his attention to the difficulty caused by the fact that the rulers who lay down the laws with exclusive regard to their own advantage may make mistakes. In that case they will command actions which are harmful to them and advantageous to their subjects; by acting justly, *i.e.* by obeying the laws, the subjects will then benefit themselves, or justice will be good. In other words, on Thrasymachus' hypothesis, the well-being of the subjects depends entirely on the folly of the rulers. When this difficulty is pointed out to him, Thrasymachus declares after some hesitation due to his slow comprehension that the rulers are not rulers if and when they make mistakes: the ruler in the strict sense is infallible, just as the other possessors of knowledge, the craftsmen and the wise in the strict sense, are infallible. It is this Thrasymachean notion of "the knower in the strict sense" transformed with the help of Socrates into that of "the artisan in the strict sense" which Socrates uses with great felicity against Thrasymachus. For the artisan in the strict sense proves to be concerned,

²⁴ *Phaedrus* 267c7–d2; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1404a13.

not with his own advantage, but with the advantage of the others whom he serves: the shoemaker makes shoes for others and only accidentally for himself; the physician prescribes things to his patients with a view to their advantage; hence, if ruling is, as Thrasymachus admitted, something like an art, the rulers serve the ruled, *i.e.* rule for the advantage of the ruled. The artisan in the strict sense is infallible, *i.e.* does his job well, and he is only concerned with the well-being of others. This however means that art strictly understood is justice—justice in deed and not merely justice in intention as law-abidingness is. “Art is justice”—this proposition reflects the Socratic assertion that virtue is knowledge. The suggestion emerging from Socrates’ discussion with Thrasymachus leads to the conclusion that the just city will be an association in which everyone is an artisan in the strict sense, a city of craftsmen or artificers, of men (and women) each of whom has a single job which he does well and with full dedication, *i.e.* without minding his own advantage, only for the good of others or for the common good. This conclusion pervades the whole teaching of the *Republic*. The city constructed therein as a model is based on the principle “one man one job” or “each should mind his own business.” The soldiers in it are “artificers” of the freedom of the city (395c); the philosophers in it are “artificers” of the whole common virtue (500d); there is an “artificer” of heaven (530a); even God is presented as an artisan—as the artificer even of the eternal ideas (507c, 597). It is because citizenship in the just city is craftsmanship of one kind or another, and the seat of craft or art is in the soul and not in the body, that the difference between the two sexes loses its importance, or the equality of the two sexes is established (452c–455a; cf. 452a). The best city is an association of artisans: it is not an association of gentlemen who “mind their own business” in the sense that they lead a retired or private life (496d6), nor an association of the fathers.

Thrasymachus could have avoided his downfall if he had left matters at the common sense view according to which rulers are of course fallible (340c1–5) or if he had said that all laws are framed by the rulers with exclusive regard to their apparent (and not necessarily true) advantage. Yet since he is or rather plays the city, his choice of the alternative which proves fatal to him was inevitable. If the just is to remain the legal, if there is to be no appeal from the laws and the rulers, the rulers must be infallible;

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if the laws are bad for the subjects, the laws will lose all respectability if they are not at least good for the rulers. This however means that the laws owe their dignity to an art; that art may even make the laws superfluous as is indicated by the facts that according to Thrasymachus the "lawgiver" may be a tyrant, *i.e.* a ruler who according to a common view rules without laws, and that the rule exercised by the arts is as such absolute rule (*Statesman* 293a8-c4). Not law but art is productive of justice. Art takes the place of law. Yet the time when Thrasymachus could play the city has gone. Since in addition we know that he is not a noble man, we are entitled to suspect that he made his fatal choice with a view to his own advantage. He was a famous teacher of rhetoric. Hence, incidentally, he is the only man professing an art who speaks in the *Republic*. The art of persuasion is necessary for persuading rulers, and especially ruling assemblies, at least ostensibly of their true advantage. Even the rulers themselves need the art of persuasion in order to persuade their subjects that the laws which are framed with exclusive regard to the benefit of the rulers serve the benefit of the subjects. Thrasymachus' own art stands and falls by the view that prudence is of the utmost importance for ruling. The clearest expression of this view is the proposition that the ruler who makes mistakes is not a ruler at all. To praise art is conducive to Thrasymachus' private good.

If art as essentially serving others is just and if Thrasymachus is the only artisan present, it follows that Socrates has beaten Thrasymachus soundly but must tacitly admit that Thrasymachus is against his will and without his knowledge the justest man present. Let us then consider his downfall somewhat more closely. One may say that that downfall is caused not by a stringent refutation nor by an accidental slip on his part, but by the conflict between his depreciation of justice and the implication of his art: there is some truth to the view that art is justice. Against this one could say—and as a matter of fact Thrasymachus himself says—that Socrates' conclusion, according to which no ruler or other artisan ever considers his own advantage, is very simple-minded. As regards the artisans proper they consider of course the compensation which they receive for their work. It may be true that to the extent to which the physician is concerned with what is characteristically called his honorarium, he does not exercise the art of medicine, but the art of money-making; but since what is true of the physician is true of the shoe-

maker and of any other craftsman as well, one would have to say that the only universal art, the art accompanying all arts, the art of arts, is the art of money-making; one must therefore further say that serving others or being just becomes good for the artisan (the giver) only through his practicing the art of money-making or that no man is just for the sake of justice or that no one likes justice as such. Differently stated, Socrates and Polemarchus sought in vain for the art which is justice; in the meantime we have seen that art as art is just; justice is not one art among many but pervades all arts; but the only art pervading all arts is the art of money-making; as a matter of fact, we call an artisan just with a view less to his exercise of his art than to his conduct regarding the compensation which he demands for his work; but the art of money-making as distinguished from the arts proper is surely not essentially just: many men who are most proficient in money-making are not just; hence the essentially just arts are ultimately in the service of an art which is not essentially just. Thrasymachus' view, according to which the private good is supreme, triumphs.

But the most devastating argument against Socrates is supplied by the arts which are manifestly devoted to the most ruthless and calculating exploitation of the ruled by the rulers. Such an art is the art of the shepherd—the art wisely chosen by Thrasymachus in order to destroy Socrates' argument, especially since kings and other rulers had been compared to shepherds from the oldest times. The shepherd is surely concerned with the well-being of his flock—so that the sheep may supply men with the juiciest lamb chops. If we are not fooled by the touching picture of the shepherd gathering or nursing a lost or ailing lamb, we see that in the last analysis the shepherds are exclusively concerned with the good of the owners and of the shepherds (343b). But—and here Thrasymachus' triumph seems to turn into his final defeat—there is obviously a difference between the owners and the shepherds: the juiciest lamb chops are for the owner and not for the shepherd, unless the shepherd is dishonest. Now, the position of Thrasymachus or of any man of his kind with regard to both rulers and ruled is precisely that of the shepherd with regard to both the owner and the sheep: Thrasymachus can derive benefit from his art, from the assistance which he gives to the rulers (regardless of whether they are tyrants, the common people, or the men of excellence), only if he is loyal to them, if he does his job for them well, if he keeps his part of the

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bargain, if he is just. Contrary to his assertion he is compelled to grant that a man's justice is salutary, not only to others, and especially to the rulers, but also to himself. What is true of the helpers of rulers is true of the rulers themselves and all other human beings (including tyrants and gangsters) who need the help of other men in their enterprises however unjust: no association can last if it does not practice justice among its members (351c7-d3). This however amounts to an admission that justice may be a mere means, if an indispensable means; for injustice: for the shearing and eating of the sheep. Justice consists in helping one's friends and harming one's enemies. The common good of the city is not fundamentally different from the common good of a gang of robbers. The art of arts is not the art of money-making but the art of war. As for Thrasymachus' art, he himself cannot think of it as the art of arts or of himself as the ruler tyrannical or non-tyrannical (344c7-8). Yet this rehabilitation of Polemarchus' view proves to have been achieved on the Thrasymachean ground: the common good is derived from the private good via calculation. Not Thrasymachus' principle but his reasoning has proved to be defective.

In replying to Thrasymachus' argument which is based on the example of the art of the shepherd, Socrates again has recourse to the notion of "art in the strict sense." He is now silent about the infallibility of art but speaks more emphatically than before (341d5) of the fact that the arts proper become beneficial to the artisan only through his practicing the art of money-making which he now calls the wage-earning or mercenary art. Denying Thrasymachus' assertion that the rulers like to rule, he asserts that if Thrasymachus were right, the rulers would not demand, as they do, wages for ruling, for the ruling of men means service to them, *i.e.* concerning oneself with other men's good and every sensible man would prefer being benefited by others to benefiting others and thus being inconvenienced (346e9, 347d2-8). Hitherto it seemed that Socrates, the friend of justice, was in favor of sacrificing the private good, including one's mere convenience, to the common good. Now it seems that he adopts Thrasymachus' principle: no one likes to serve or help others or to act justly unless it is made profitable to him; the wise man seeks only his own good, not the other man's good; justice in itself is bad. Let us remind ourselves here of the fact that Socrates had never said that justice consists in helping everyone regardless of whether he is one's friend or one's enemy or whether

he is good or bad. The difference between Thrasymachus and Socrates is then merely this: according to Thrasymachus, justice is an unnecessary evil whereas according to Socrates it is a necessary evil. This terrible result is by no means sufficiently counteracted by the exchange between Socrates and Glaucon which takes place at this point. As a matter of fact, what Socrates says to Glaucon suggests this result as much as it contradicts it. It is therefore necessary for Socrates to prove immediately afterward that justice is good. He proves this in three arguments addressed to Thrasymachus. The arguments are far from conclusive. They are defective on account of the procedure followed, a procedure proposed by Socrates, approved by Glaucon and imposed on Thrasymachus. It demands that instead of "counting and measuring" they should argue on the basis of premises on which they agree, and in particular of the premise that if something is similar to *X*, it is *X* (348a7-b7; 350c7-8, d4-5; 476c6-7), to say nothing of the fact that Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus' assertion that no one likes to rule leaves something to be desired (347b8-e2). The only argument of a different kind, of not so "simple" a kind (351a6-7) is the central one which establishes that no society however unjust can last if it does not practice justice among its members. When Socrates has completed the proof of the goodness of justice, he frankly states that the proof is radically inadequate: he has proved that justice is good without knowing what justice is. Superficially this means that the three views of justice proposed successively by Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus have been refuted and no other view has been tested or even stated. Yet through the refutation of the three views and the reflection about them it has become clear, not perhaps what justice is but what the problem of justice is. Justice has proved to be the art which on the one hand assigns to every citizen what is good for his soul and which on the other hand determines the common good of the city. Hence Socrates' attempt to prove that justice is good without having previously settled what justice is, is not absurd, for it has been settled that justice is one of the two things mentioned. There would be no difficulty if one could be certain that the common good were identical or at least in harmony with the good of all individuals. It is because we cannot yet be certain of this harmony that we cannot yet say with definiteness that justice is good. It is the tension within justice which gives rise to the question of whether justice is good or bad—of whether the

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primary consideration is the common good or the individual's own good.

When Thrasymachus begins to speak, he behaves according to Socrates' lively description like a raving beast; by the end of the first book he has become completely tame. He has been tamed by Socrates: the action of the first book consists in a marvelous victory of Socrates. As we have seen, that action is also a disgraceful defeat of Socrates as the defender of justice. It almost goes without saying that Thrasymachus has in no way become convinced by Socrates of the goodness of justice. This goes far toward explaining Thrasymachus' taming: while his reasoning proves to be poor, his principle remains victorious. He must have found no small comfort in the observation that Socrates' reasoning was on the whole not superior to his, although he must have been impressed both by the cleverness with which Socrates argued badly on purpose and the superior frankness with which he admitted at the end the weakness of his proof. Yet all this implies that Socrates has succeeded perfectly in establishing his ascendancy over Thrasymachus; from now on Thrasymachus will not only no longer try to teach—he will not even be a speaker any more. On the other hand he shows by the fact that he stays on for many hours unrelieved by sights, food or drink, to say nothing of satisfactions of his vanity (344d1), that he has become a willing listener, a subordinate of Socrates. From the beginning he regarded his art as ministerial to rulers and hence he regarded himself as ministerial. His art consists in gratifying rulers and especially ruling multitudes. His opening statements in which he imitated the city revealed him as a man willing and able to gratify the city. He gradually came to see that by gratifying the political multitude he would not gratify the multitude assembled in Polemarchus' house. At least the vocal majority of the latter multitude is clearly on Socrates' side.²⁵ While Thrasymachus is more outspoken and less easily restrained than Polus in the *Gorgias*, he is less daring, less outspoken than Callicles, and this is surely connected with the fact that he is not an Athenian citizen.²⁶ From a certain moment on he shows a curious hesitation to become identified with the thesis which he propounds. Given this restraint,

²⁵ 337d10, 345a1-2. Cf. 350e6; 351c6, d7; 352b4; 354a10-11 with *Gorgias* 462d5.

²⁶ Cf. 348e5-349a2 with *Gorgias* 474c4-d2, 482d7-e5, and 487a7-b1.

the discussion between him and Socrates is in a sense a joke (349a6-b1). We may say that in the conversation between Socrates and Thrasymachus, justice is treated in a bantering and hence unjust manner. This is not altogether surprising since Thrasymachus, in contradistinction to the characters in the *Euthyphro* and the *Laches* for instance, does not take seriously the virtue under discussion; he does take seriously his art. In all these matters we must never forget the rhetoric used by Socrates in his description of Thrasymachus; it is very easy to read his discussion with Thrasymachus in the light of that description. The powerful effect of that description illustrates beautifully the virtues of the narrated dialogue.

What Socrates does in the Thrasymachus section would be inexcusable if he had not done it in order to provoke the passionate reaction of Glaucon, a reaction which he presents as entirely unexpected. According to his presentation Glaucon, who was responsible for Socrates' staying in the Piraeus (not to say for his descending to the Piraeus), is responsible also for the bulk of the *Republic*, for the elaboration of the best city. With Glaucon's entry, which is immediately followed by the entry of his brother Adeimantus, the discussion changes its character profoundly. It becomes altogether Athenian. In contradistinction to the three non-Athenians with whom Socrates conversed in the first book, Glaucon and Adeimantus are not tainted by the slightest defect of manners. They fulfill to a considerable degree the conditions stated by Aristotle in his *Ethics* which participants in discussions of noble things must fulfill. They belong by nature to a nobler polity than the characters of the first book, who belong respectively to oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. They belong at the very least to timocracy, the regime dedicated to honor. Being an intelligent lover of justice, Glaucon is thoroughly displeased with Socrates' sham refutation of Thrasymachus' assertion that injustice is preferable to justice or that justice taken by itself is an evil, if a necessary evil: Socrates had merely charmed Thrasymachus. Being courageous and high-minded, loathing the very suggestion of a calculated and calculating justice, he wishes to hear Socrates praise justice as choiceworthy for its own sake without any regard to its consequences or purposes. Thus while Socrates is responsible for the fact that justice is the theme of the conversation, Glaucon is responsible for the manner in which it is treated. In order to hear a solid praise of justice itself, he presents a solid blame of it, a blame which could serve as the model for the praise.

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It is obvious that he is dissatisfied not only with Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus but with Thrasymachus' statement of the case for injustice as well. He would not have been able to surpass Thrasymachus if he were not thoroughly familiar with the view propounded by Thrasymachus; that view is not peculiar to Thrasymachus but held by "the many," by "ten thousand others." Glaucon believes in justice; this authorizes him as it were to attack justice in the most vigorous manner. For an unjust man would not attack justice; he would prefer that the others remain the dupes of the belief in justice so that they might become his dupes. A just man on the other hand would never attack justice unless to provoke the praise of justice. Glaucon's dissatisfaction with Thrasymachus' attack on justice is justified. Thrasymachus had started from the law and the city as already established: he had taken them for granted. He had remained within the limits of "opinion." He had not gone back to "nature." This was due to his concern with his art and hence with art as such. When developing Thrasymachus' notion of "art strictly understood," Socrates speaks with Thrasymachus' entire approval of the self-sufficiency of art, of every art, as contrasted with the not of self-sufficiency of the things with which art is concerned; he contrasts the goodness of the art of medicine *e.g.* with the badness of the human body; he also says that the art of medicine is related to the human body as sight is to the eyes. Elaborating a Thrasymachean suggestion, Socrates almost contrasts the goodness of art with the badness of nature. (Cf. 341c4-342d7 with 373d1-2, 405aff. and *Protagoras* 321c-e.) Glaucon on the other hand in praising injustice goes back to nature as good. But how does he know what injustice and hence justice is? He assumes that he can answer the question of what justice is by answering the question of how justice came into being: the What or the nature of justice is identical with its coming-into-being. Yet the origin of justice proves to be the goodness of doing injustice and the badness of suffering injustice. One can overcome this difficulty by saying that by nature everyone is concerned only with his own good and wholly unconcerned with anyone else's good to the point that he has no hesitation whatever to harm his fellows in any way conducive to his own good. Since all men act according to nature, they all bring about a situation which is unbearable for most of them; the majority, *i.e.* the weaklings, figure out that every one of them would be better off if they agreed among themselves not to harm one another. Thus they

began to lay down laws; thus justice arose. Yet what is true of the majority of men is not true of him who is "truly a man" who can take care of himself and who is better off if he does not submit to law or convention. But even the others do violence to their nature by submitting to law and injustice; they submit only from fear of the evil consequences of injustice, of consequences which presuppose the detection of injustice. Hence the perfectly unjust man whose injustice remains completely concealed, who is therefore reputed to be perfectly just, leads the happiest life, whereas the perfectly just man whose justice remains completely unknown, who has the reputation of being completely unjust, leads the most miserable life. (This implies that Thrasymachus is not a completely unjust man.) Therefore since, as Glaucon hopes, justice is choice-worthy for its own sake, he demands from Socrates in effect that he show that the life of the just man who lives and dies in the utmost misery and infamy is better than the life of the unjust man who lives and dies in abounding happiness and glory.

Glaucon agrees then with Thrasymachus in holding that justice is legality. But he makes this view more precise: justice is respect of the legally established equality which supersedes the contradictory natural inequality. Accordingly he denies that justice is the advantage of the stronger; according to him, justice is the advantage of the weaker.²⁷ When asserting that justice is the advantage of the stronger, Thrasymachus did not think of the naturally stronger (he is not concerned with nature but with art) but of the factually stronger, and, as he knew, the many who are by nature weak, may by banding together become stronger than those by nature strong (*Gorgias* 488c-e). We may therefore say that Thrasymachus' view is truer, more sober, more pedestrian than Glaucon's view. The same holds true of the most important difference between Glaucon and Thrasymachus. Glaucon denies that anyone is genuinely just, whereas Thrasymachus does not have the slightest doubt that there are many just men whom he despises indeed as simpletons. Glaucon is concerned with genuine justice, whereas Thrasymachus is satisfied with overt behavior. Glaucon looks into the hearts, and if someone would say that one cannot look into all men's hearts, we shall limit ourselves to saying that Glaucon has looked into his own heart and has found there injustice struggling manfully with his good breeding

²⁷ 347d8-e2; cf. Adeimantus' agreement with Thrasymachus (367c2-5).

(cf. 619b7-d1). He looks for a man who is truly just. In order to see him or rather in order to show that no one is truly just, he is compelled to make use of fiction based on myth (359d5-8); he has to assume that the impossible is possible. In order to understand the relation between the genuinely and purely just man and the genuinely and purely unjust man, he is compelled to become an "imitative" artisan (361d4-6), who presents as possible what is by nature impossible. All this is necessary in order to give Socrates a model for his praise of justice as choiceworthy for its own sake. From this we understand Glaucon's most radical deviation from Thrasymachus. In the discussion with Thrasymachus the issue had become blurred to some extent by the suggestion that there is a kinship between justice and art. Glaucon makes the issue manifest by comparing the perfectly unjust man to the perfect artisan who distinguishes clearly between what is possible and what is impossible for his art, whereas he considers the perfectly just man as a simple man who has no quality other than justice: he goes so far as to use some Aeschylean verses in which the just and pious man is described as shrewd and as having a fertile mind for describing the perfectly unjust man.²⁸ Perhaps he thought that his restatement makes the thought more conformable to the spirit of the Marathon fighter Aeschylus. Glaucon's perfectly just man is divorced from art and from nature: he is altogether a piece of fiction.

The view which Glaucon maintains in common with Thrasymachus implies that there is an insoluble conflict between the good of the individual and the common good. Hobbes, starting from a similar premise, reached the opposite conclusion because he denied that any good which any individual can possibly enjoy is as great as the evil which threatens him in the absence of society, peace, or the common good. Glaucon in contradistinction to Thrasymachus points to this consideration (358e4-5) but he also refers to the fundamental difference, denied by Hobbes, between the many who are by nature weak, and the few who are by nature strong. Glaucon thus rejoins Thrasymachus in holding that the good life is the tyrannical life, the exploitation, more or less concealed, of society or convention for one's own benefit alone, *i.e.* for the only natural good.

²⁸ 360e7-361a1; 361b2-6, c3; 362a8-b1, b7-8; Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 590-610.

The refutation of this Unjust Speech which Hobbes attempted²⁹ on the basis of natural equality was attempted by Socrates on the basis of natural inequality: precisely natural inequality properly understood supplies the refutation of the tyrannical life. Hobbes however cannot consistently maintain the distinction between the tyrant and the king. As for the view which Glaucon implicitly opposes to Thrasymachus' view, it cannot but remind us of Kant's view—of Kant's moving description of the simple man who has no quality other than the good will, the only thing of absolute worth. The opening statement of his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* makes it clear that morality as he understands it is more akin to justice than to any other virtue. Morality as Kant understands it is as much divorced from art and nature as justice is according to Glaucon: the moral laws are not natural laws nor technical rules. The fate of Glaucon's view in the *Republic* foreshadows the fate of Kant's moral philosophy. What Glaucon intends is however better indicated by "honor" than by "the good will." When the signers of the Declaration of Independence say: "we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor," they mean that they are resolved to forsake their lives and fortunes, but to maintain their honor: honor shines most clearly when everything else is sacrificed for its sake, including life, the matter of the first natural right mentioned in the Declaration of Independence. While honor or justice presupposes life and both are meant to serve life, they are nevertheless higher in rank than life.³⁰ It is this seeming paradox to which Glaucon draws our attention in his description of the perfectly just man. Within the *Republic* this thought is prepared by the notion of "art in the strict sense," i.e. by the divorce of art from the advantage of the artisan and the implied depreciation of nature.

Glaucon's demand on Socrates is strongly supported by his brother Adeimantus. It becomes clear from Adeimantus' speech that Glaucon's view according to which justice must be choice-worthy entirely for its own sake is altogether novel: the decay of justice is as old as the human race. Glaucon's blame of justice had insensibly shifted into a praise of justice. Adeimantus finds that

²⁹ *Leviathan* ch. 15 (p. 94 Blackwell's Political Texts ed.).

³⁰ Cicero, *De Finibus* III 20-22.

Glaucon had omitted the most important point. Adeimantus' speech is less a blame of justice than a blame of the common, nay, universal, praise of justice by which justice is praised with exclusive regard to its consequences and hence as intrinsically bad. In Adeimantus' opinion Glaucon had not sufficiently stressed the recourse to the gods in the common praise, and especially in the poets' praise, of justice: justice is good because it is rewarded by the gods and injustice is bad because it is punished by them. Adeimantus demands then that the genuine praise of justice exclude divine punishment and reward; the genuine praise of justice surely requires the banishment of the poets. There is yet another kind of speech about justice and injustice which is also proffered both privately and by the poets. Moderation and justice are universally praised as indeed noble but hard and toilsome, *i.e.* as noble by convention and unpleasant and hence bad by nature. Adeimantus demands then that the genuine praise of justice present justice as intrinsically pleasant and easy (364a2-4, c6-d3; cf. 357b5-8 and 358a). Yet the strangest ones of the second kind of speech are those which say that the gods send misery to many good men and felicity to many bad ones, *i.e.* that the gods are responsible for the toilsome character of justice and the easy character of injustice. Adeimantus demands then that the genuine praise of justice exclude not only divine punishments and rewards but any divine action on men; and if it should prove hard to assert that the gods do not act on men while being aware of men, that the genuine praise of justice exclude divine knowledge of human things. At any rate, the hitherto universal praise of justice supplies the strongest incentive to injustice if injustice disguises itself successfully as justice. Such injustice is not an easy thing; it is in its way as difficult as justice is according to the old view; it is not possible without art, the art of rhetoric; but it is the only way toward felicity (cf. 365c7-d6 with 364a2-4). Precisely on the basis of the still universally or almost universally held beliefs, the argument for injustice is so powerful that only two kinds of men are voluntarily just: those who, thanks to a divine nature, feel disgust at acting unjustly and those who, having acquired knowledge, abstain from acting unjustly; neither of these two kinds of men will be angry at the unjust, although the former feel disgust at the thought that they themselves could act unjustly (366c3-d3).

The speeches of the two brothers are in character. Glaucon is characterized by manliness and impetuosity rather than by modera-

tion and quietness and the opposite is true of Adeimantus ("the fearless one"). Accordingly Glaucon sees the splendor of justice in its toilsomeness whereas Adeimantus sees it rather in its pleasantness and ease and in its freedom from anger. Glaucon's just man is purely just—he has no quality other than justice and in particular no art; he does not even remotely remind of the philosopher. Adeimantus' just man on the other hand may be a man of knowledge. Adeimantus is more sober than Glaucon. Glaucon's speech makes use of poetry; Adeimantus' speech is so to speak nothing but an indictment of poetry. In order to discover what justice is, Socrates will have to weave together the courageous and the moderate, the suggestions peculiar to Glaucon and the suggestions peculiar to Adeimantus. He is able to do this to the extent to which the difference between the two brothers is less great than their agreement. They agree in their demand on Socrates that he praise justice as choiceworthy for its own sake, or pleasant, or even by itself sufficient to make a man perfectly happy in the midst of what is ordinarily believed to be the most extreme misery. In making this demand they establish the standard by which we must judge Socrates' praise of justice; they thus force us to investigate whether or to what extent Socrates has proved in the *Republic* that justice has the characteristics mentioned.

Socrates declares himself to be unable to defend justice against the two brothers' attack (368b4–7, 362d7–9) but he undoubtedly replies to it at very great length. The very least he will have to do is to show why he cannot comply fully with Glaucon's demand. In order to understand his procedure, we must remind ourselves again of the result of the first book. Justice came to sight as the art of assigning to each what is good for his soul and as the art of discerning and procuring the common good. Justice thus understood is not found in any city; it therefore becomes necessary to found a city in which justice as defined can be practiced. The difficulty is whether assigning to each what is good for him is the same as, or at least compatible with, procuring the common good. The difficulty would disappear if the common good were identical with the private good of each, and this would be possible if there were no essential difference, but only a quantitative difference, between the city and the individual, or if there were a strict parallel between the city and the individual. Assuming such a parallel Socrates turns first to investigating justice in the city and more particularly to the

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coming-into-being of the city which is accompanied by the coming-into-being of the city's justice and injustice, *i.e.* to the coming-into-being of the city out of the pre-political individuals. This procedure may be said to have been imposed on him by Glaucon. Glaucon had identified the What or the essence of justice with its coming-into-being; justice appeared to be preceded by contract and law, and hence by the city, which in its turn appeared to be preceded by individuals each of whom was concerned exclusively with his own advantage. That Socrates too should start from the individual concerned exclusively with his own good, is intelligible also directly on the basis of the result of the first book.

Nevertheless one cannot help wondering why Socrates is at all concerned with the coming-into-being of justice or why he does not limit himself to grasping the What, the essence, the idea of justice; for surely Socrates, in contradistinction to Glaucon, was incapable of identifying the What of a thing with its coming-into-being. By looking at the idea of justice which is of course the same regardless of whether an individual or a city participates in it, just as the idea of the equal is the same regardless of whether two pebbles or two mountains are equal, he could have avoided many difficulties. When investigating any of the other virtues in the other dialogues, he does not even dream of investigating the coming-into-being of beings which participate in these virtues. Socrates starts from "justice in the city" instead of from "justice in the individual" because the former is written in larger letters than the latter. But since the city possesses courage, moderation, and wisdom as well, he should have started his investigations of these virtues in the dialogues devoted to them also by considering these virtues as virtues of the city. Could this be the reason why the investigations of the *Euthyphro*, the *Laches*, the *Charmides*, and so on do not lead to a positive result? Socrates' procedure in the *Republic* can perhaps be explained as follows: there is a particularly close connection between justice and the city and while there is surely an idea of justice, there is perhaps no idea of the city. For there are not ideas of "everything." The eternal and unchangeable ideas are distinguished from the particular things which come into being and perish, and which are what they are by virtue of their participating in the idea in question; the particular things contain then something which cannot be traced to the ideas, which accounts for their belonging to the sphere of becoming as distinguished from being and in particular why they

participate in ideas as distinguished from being ideas. Perhaps the city belongs so radically to the sphere of becoming that there cannot be an idea of the city. Aristotle says that Plato recognized ideas only of natural beings.²¹ Perhaps Plato did not regard the city as a natural being. Yet if there is a strict parallel between the city and the human individual, the city would seem to be a natural being. Surely by asserting that parallel, Socrates contradicts Glaucon's thesis which may be said to be to the effect that the city is against nature. On the other hand, by putting such an emphasis on the coming-into-being of the city, Socrates compels us to raise the question which we have raised.

The city does not come into being like a natural being; it is founded by Socrates together with Glaucon and Adeimantus (369a5-6, c9-10). But in contradistinction to all other known cities it will be according to nature. Prior to their turning to the founding of the city Glaucon and Adeimantus had taken the side of injustice. At the moment they begin to act as founders they take the side of justice. This radical change, this transformation, is not due to any seduction or charm practiced by Socrates, nor does it constitute a genuine conversion. Taking the side of injustice means praising and choosing the tyrannical life, being a tyrant, being dedicated to nothing but one's greatest power and honor. But the honor of a tyrant who exploits a city which is the work of others is petty compared with the honor of the man who founds a city, who, for the sake of his glory alone, must be concerned with founding the most perfect city or must dedicate himself entirely to the service of the city. The "logic" of injustice leads from the small-time criminal via the tyrant to the immortal founder. Glaucon and Adeimantus cooperating with Socrates in founding the best city remind one of the young tyrant mentioned in the *Laws* (709e6-710b3; cf. *Republic* 487a) who does not possess justice and cooperates with the wise legislator.

The founding of the good city takes place in three stages: the founding of the healthy city called the city of pigs, the founding of the purified city or the city of the armed camp, and the founding of the City of Beauty or the city ruled by the philosophers.

The city has its origin in human needs: every human being, just or unjust, is in need of many things and is at least for this reason

²¹ *Metaphysics* 991b6-7, 1070a18-20.

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in need of other human beings. By starting from the self-interest of each we arrive at the necessity of the city and therewith of the common good for the sake of each man's own good (369c7, 370a3-4). By identifying to some extent the question of justice with the question of the city and by tracing the city to man's needs, Socrates indicates that it is impossible to praise justice without regard to the function or consequence of justice. The fundamental phenomenon is not, as Glaucon had asserted, the desire to have more than others but the desire for the necessities of life; the desire to have more is secondary. The healthy city satisfies properly the primary needs, the needs of the body. This proper satisfaction requires that everyone work for his living in such a way that he exercises only one art. This is in accordance with nature: men differ from one another by nature or different men are gifted for different ends, and the nature of the work to be done requires this "specialization." When everyone dedicates himself to a single art, Glaucon's and Adeimantus' conflicting views of the just man are reconciled: the just man is simple and the just man is a man of knowledge (397e). As a consequence everyone does almost all his work for others but also the others work for him. All will exchange with one another their products as their products: there will be private property; by working for the advantage of others everyone will work for his own advantage. Since everyone will exercise the art for which he is best fitted by nature, the burden will be easier on everyone. The healthy city is a happy city; it knows no poverty, no coercion or government, no war, and no eating of animals. It is happy in such a way that every member of it is happy: it does not need government because there is perfect harmony between everyone's service and his reward; no one encroaches on anyone else. It does not need government because everyone chooses by himself the art for which he is best fitted: everyone takes to his particular trade as a duck takes to water; there is perfect harmony between natural gifts and preferences. There is also perfect harmony between what is good for the individual (his choosing the art for which he is best fitted by nature) and what is good for the city: nature has so arranged things that there is no surplus of blacksmiths or deficit of shoemakers. The healthy city is happy because it is just and it is just because it is happy. It is just without anyone concerning himself with justice; it is just by nature. The healthy city is altogether natural; it is little in need of medicine because in the healthy city the bodies are not as bad as they were

supposed to be in the conversation with Thrasymachus (341e4-6, 373d1-3). In the healthy city justice is free from any tincture of self-sacrifice: justice is easy and pleasant. Justice is easy and pleasant because no one has to concern himself with the common good and to dedicate himself to it; the only action which could look like concern with the common good, the restriction of the number of children (372b8-c1), will be effected by everyone thinking of his own good. The healthy city complies with the demand of Adeimantus. It complies to some extent with Adeimantus' character.³² It is Adeimantus' city. But it is wholly unacceptable to his brother. It does not satisfy Glaucon's need for luxury, and in the first place for meat. (He did not get the promised dinner.) But we could greatly underestimate him if we were to believe him. He does not lie of course, but he is not fully aware of what induces him to rebel against the healthy city. The healthy city may be just in a sense but it surely lacks virtue or excellence (cf. 372b7-8 with 607a4): such justice as it possesses is not virtue. Glaucon is characterized by the fact that he cannot distinguish between his desire for dinner and his desire for virtue. (He is the one who calls the healthy city the city of pigs. In this respect too he does not quite know what he says. The healthy city is literally a city without pigs. Cf 370d-e and 373c.) Virtue is impossible without toil, effort or repression of the evil in oneself. In the healthy city evil is only dormant. Death is mentioned only when the transition from the healthy city to the next stage has already begun (372d). Because virtue is impossible in the healthy city, the healthy city is impossible. The healthy city or any other form of anarchic society would be possible if men could remain innocent; but it is of the essence of innocence that it is easily lost; men can be just only through knowledge. "Self-realization" is not essentially in harmony with sociability.

Socrates calls the healthy city the true city or simply the city (372e6-7, 374a5, 433a2-6). It is the city *par excellence* for more than one reason, one reason being that it exhibits the fundamental character of the best city. When Socrates speaks about the primary needs which bring men together, he mentions food, housing, and clothing but is silent about procreation. He speaks only of those natural needs which are satisfied by means of arts as distinguished

³² Consider Adeimantus' most lengthy reply in this context (371c5-d3: the need for shopkeepers) with Socrates' reply (e5-6: "as I believe").

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from that natural need which is satisfied naturally. He abstracts from procreation in order to be able to understand the city as an association of artisans or in order to effect as complete a coincidence as possible between the city and the arts. The city and the arts belong together. Socrates seems to agree with the Bible in so far as the Bible traces the city as well as the arts to one and the same origin.³³ At any rate, we are forced to reconsider the natural character of the healthy city. The care for men which the description of the healthy city ascribes to nature goes much beyond what nature ever provides. It could be ascribed only to the gods. No wonder that the citizens of the healthy city sing hymns to the gods. All the more remarkable is the silence of Socrates and Adeimantus about the gods' efficacy in the healthy city.

Before the purified city can emerge or rather be established, the healthy city must have decayed. Its decay is brought about by the emancipation of the desire for unnecessary things, *i.e.* for things which are not necessary for the well-being of the body. Thus the luxurious or feverish city emerges, the city characterized by striving for unlimited acquisition of wealth. One can expect that in such a city the individuals will no longer exercise the single art for which each is fitted by nature, but any art, genuine or spurious, or combination of arts which is most lucrative or that there will no longer be a strict correspondence between service and reward; hence there will be dissatisfaction and conflicts and therefore need for government which will restore justice; hence there will be need for something else which was also entirely absent from the healthy city, *i.e.* the education at least of the rulers and more particularly education to justice. Justice will no longer be effective naturally. This is reflected in the conversation: whereas in the description of the healthy city Socrates and his interlocutors were onlookers of the coming-into-being of the city, they must now become founders, men responsible for the effectiveness of justice (cf. 374e6-9 with 369c9-10; 378e7-379a1). There will also be need for additional territory and hence there will be war, war of aggression. Building on the principle "one man one art," Socrates demands that the army consist of men who have no other art than the art of war. It appears that the art of the warrior or guardian is by far superior to the other arts. Hitherto it looked as if all arts were of equal rank and the only

³³ Cf. also Sophocles, *Antigone* 332ff. with 786ff.

universal art or the only art accompanying all arts was the art of money-making (342a-c, 346c). Now we receive the first glimpse of the true order of arts: that order is hierarchic; the universal art is the highest art, the art directing all other arts which as such cannot be practiced by the practitioners of arts other than the highest; in particular, it cannot be practiced by anyone practicing the money-making art. The art of arts will prove to be philosophy. For the time being we are merely told that the warrior must have a nature resembling the nature of that philosophic beast, the dog. For the warriors must be spirited and hence irascible and harsh on the one hand and gentle on the other, since they must possess disinterested dislike for foreigners and disinterested liking for their fellow citizens. The men possessing such special natures need in addition a special education. With a view to their work they need training in the art of war, of guarding the city. But this is not the education with which Socrates is much concerned. We recall that the art of the keeper proved to be identical with the art of the thief. The education of the guardians must make sure that they will not practice thievery and the like except perhaps against a foreign enemy. The warriors will be by nature the best fighters and in addition they will be the only ones armed and trained in arms: they will inevitably be the sole possessors of political power. Besides, the age of innocence having gone, evil will be rampant in the city and therefore also in the warriors. The education which the warriors more than anyone else need is therefore education in civic virtue. This is again reflected in the conversation. The one who rebelled against the healthy city was Glaucon; his rebellion was prompted by his desire for luxury, for "having more," for the thrills of war and destruction (cf. 471b6-c1). He is now compelled by Socrates to accept the complete divorce of the profession of arms from all luxury and gain (374a3): the spirit of luxury and gain is replaced by the spirit of discipline and selfless service. Glaucon's education in this respect is part of the education to moderation which is effected by the conversation reported in the *Republic* as a whole.

The education of the warriors in civic virtue is "music" education, education through poetry and music. Not all poetry and music is apt to make men good citizens in general and good warriors in particular. Therefore the poetry and music not conducive to the acquisition of the virtues in question must be banished from the city. The specific pleasure which poetry affords can be tolerated only

when it is conducive to the noble, to nobility of character. The austerity of this demand is entirely agreeable to Adeimantus who is now again Socrates' interlocutor. Socrates himself regards that demand as provisional; the whole discussion partakes of the character of myth.⁴ The first place is occupied by education to piety. Piety requires that only the right kind of stories about the gods be told, not the kind told by the greatest poets. To indicate the right kind Socrates lays down two laws regarding what Adeimantus calls "theology." For the proper understanding of that theology one must consider the context. The theology is to serve as model for the untrue stories to be told to little children (377c7-d1 and a). As we know, untrue stories are needed not only for little children but also for the grown-up citizens of the good city, but it is probably best if they are imbued with these stories from the earliest possible moment. There was no need for untrue stories in the city of pigs. This may have been one reason why Socrates called it "the true city," i.e. the truthful city. At any rate, the conversation between Socrates and Adeimantus about the theology shifts insensibly from the demand for noble lies about the gods to the demand for the truth about the gods. The speakers start from the implicit premise that there are gods, or that there is a god and that they know what a god is. The difficulty can be illustrated by an example. Socrates asks Adeimantus whether the god would lie or say the untruth because of his ignorance of ancient things and Adeimantus replies that this would be ridiculous (382d6-8). But why is it ridiculous in Adeimantus' view? Because the gods must know best their own affairs, as Timaeus suggests (*Timaeus* 40d3-41a5)? It is true that Timaeus makes a distinction between the visible gods who revolve manifestly and those gods who manifest themselves so far as they choose, between the cosmic gods and the Olympian gods, and that no such distinction is made in the theology of the *Republic* where only the Olympian gods are identified. But precisely this fact shows the "mythical" character of the theology or the gravity of the failure to raise and answer the question "what is a god?" or "who are the gods?" Other Socratic utterances might enable one to ascertain Socrates' answer, but they are of no use for ascertaining Adeimantus' answer and therewith for gauging how deep the agreement is which Socrates and Adeimantus achieve. They surely agree as to this, that

⁴ 376d9, 387b3-4, 388e2-4, 389a7, 390a5, 396c10, 397d6-e2, 398a8.

the gods are superhuman beings, that they are of superhuman goodness or perfection (381c1-3). That the god is good is even the thesis of the first theological law. From this it follows that the god is not the cause of all things but only of the good ones. This amounts to saying that the god is just: the first theological law applies to the god the result of the conversation with Polemarchus according to which justice consists in helping the friends, *i.e.* sensible men and in not harming anyone.³⁵ The explicit difficulty concerns exclusively the other theological law which asserts the simplicity of the god and which is to some extent a mere corollary of the first. The second law has two implications: (1) the god does not change his looks or form (*eidos* or *idea*), *i.e.* he does not take on a variety of shapes or undergo changes of his form; (2) the gods do not deceive or lie. In contradistinction to the first law, the second law is not immediately evident to Adeimantus; this is true especially of the second implication (380a7, 381e11, 382a3). Adeimantus obviously sees no difficulty in maintaining simultaneously that the gods are good and that they lie: the gods possess all virtues, hence also justice, and justice sometimes requires lying; as Socrates makes clear partly in this context and partly shortly afterwards,³⁶ rulers must lie for the benefit of their subjects; if the gods are just or rulers, it would seem that they must lie. Adeimantus' resistance is then due to his concern with justice as distinguished from love of truth (382a4-10) or philosophy. He resists the dogma stating the simplicity of the gods because he is more willing than his brother to grant that justice is akin to knowledge or art rather than it is essentially simplicity. His resistance is not altogether in harmony with the implications of his long speech near the beginning of the second book.³⁷ This is not surprising: he still has much to learn. After all, he does not yet know what justice is. Somewhat later in the conversation Socrates suggests that justice is a specifically human virtue (392a3-c3), perhaps because justice is rooted in the fact that every human being lacks self-sufficiency and hence is ordered toward the city (369b5-7) and therefore that man is essentially "erotic" whereas the gods are self-

³⁵ 382d11-e3, 378b2-3, 380b1. Polemarchus and Adeimantus appear together: 327c1; cf. 449b1-7.

³⁶ 382c6ff., 389b2-d6; cf. the conditional and partly metrical clause in 389b2-4.

³⁷ The core of the difficulty is indicated in 366c7 as one sees if one considers the fact that the gods themselves must have divine natures.

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sufficient and hence free from *eros*. *Eros* and justice would thus seem to have the same root.

The education of the warriors as envisaged by Socrates is education to almost all virtues. Piety, courage, moderation, and justice are clearly recognizable as goals of this education, whereas wisdom is replaced by truthfulness and rejection of love of laughter. The discussion of how to educate the warriors to justice is postponed on the ground that the interlocutors do not yet know what justice is.³⁸ This ground is rather specious, for they can hardly be said to know what the other virtues are either. We see the true ground when we pay attention to the fact that as the conversation turns to music proper, the music and erotic Glaucon who makes his re-entry laughingly again takes the place of his brother (398c7, e1; 402e2). Generally speaking, Glaucon is the interlocutor of Socrates in the *Republic* whenever the highest themes are discussed. It is in a conversation with Glaucon that Socrates makes clear the ultimate end of the education of the warriors. That ultimate end proves to be *eros* of the beautiful or noble. That *eros* is linked especially to courage and above all to moderation or seemliness.³⁹ Justice, in the narrow sense may be said to flow from moderation or from the proper combination of moderation and courage. Socrates thus makes silently clear the difference between the gang of robbers and the good city: these kinds of society differ essentially because the armed and ruling part of the good city is animated by the *eros* for everything beautiful and graceful. The difference is not to be sought in the fact that the good city is guided in its relations to other cities, Greek or barbarian, by considerations of justice: the size of the territory of the good city is determined by that city's own moderate needs and by nothing else (423a5-c1; cf. 422d1-7); the relation of the city to the other cities belongs to the province of wisdom rather than of justice (428d2-3); the good city is not a part of a community of cities or is not dedicated to the common good of that community or does not serve other cities. Therefore, if the parallel between the city and the individual is to be preserved, one must at least try to understand the virtues of the individual in terms of virtues other than justice. It is in connection with this experiment that *eros* of the

³⁸ Cf. 395c4-5 and 427e10-11 with 386a1-6; 388e5; 389b2, d7; 392a8-c5.

³⁹ 399c3, e11; 401a5-8; 402c2-4; 403c4-8; 410a8-9; e10; 411c4ff. (376e2-10); 416d8-e1.

beautiful provisionally takes the place of justice. One might say that in this stage the situation in the good city is exactly the reverse of the situation in the healthy city.

While the parallel between the city and the individual is thus surreptitiously established, it is surreptitiously brought into question. In order to be as good as possible, the city must be united or one as much as possible and therefore the individual must be one as much as possible: every citizen must devote himself single-mindedly to a single art (423d3-6). Justice is simplicity. Hence education must be simple: the simple gymnastic and the simple music is to be preferred to the composite, "sophisticated," or complex forms (404b5, 7, e4-5; 410a8-9). But man is a dual being, consisting of body and soul: in order to become an educated warrior, one must therefore practice the two arts (411e4) of gymnastic and music.⁴⁰ This dualism is illustrated by the radical difference discussed in this context between the physician, the healer of the body, and the judge, the healer of the soul. It goes without saying that music itself consists of two arts, poetry and music in the narrow sense, to say nothing of the art of reading and writing (402b3). If Asclepius' sons combine the two heterogeneous arts of medicine and war (408a1-2), one begins to wonder whether the strict separation of the men devoting themselves to the art of war from all other artisans (374a3-d6) is Socrates' last word. Perhaps it is also not as impossible as Socrates here suggests for the same man to be a good comic poet and a good tragic poet, especially since we learn from the context that the man of noble simplicity who for the sake of this simplicity would never imitate a lower man, might nevertheless do this in jest: the dualism of play and seriousness warns us against too simple an understanding of simplicity. Such a simple understanding is however most simply prevented by the recollection of the fact that the rulers of the best city must combine the two heterogeneous activities of the philosopher on the one hand and of the king on the other.

The difference between justice and the *eros* of the beautiful which is the end of the warriors' education comes out in Socrates' discussion of the rulers. The rulers must be taken from among the elite of the warriors. In addition to possessing the art of guarding

⁴⁰ Cf. the different meaning of "unmixed" in 410d3 and 412a4 on the one hand and in 397d2 (cf. e1-2) on the other.

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the citizens, the rulers must possess the quality of caring for the city or of loving the city; this love (*philia*) is not *eros*. As we recall, the art of guarding is in itself also the art of thieving. A man is most likely to love that whose interest he believes to be identical with his own interest or whose happiness he believes to be the condition of his own happiness (412c5-d8). The love which is demanded of the rulers is then neither spontaneous nor disinterested in the sense that the good ruler would love the city without any regard to his own interest; the love expected of him is a calculating kind of love. Justice as dedication to the common good is neither art nor *eros*; it does not appear to be choiceworthy for its own sake. Caring for one's city is one thing; undergoing the hardships of ruling the city, *i.e.* of serving the city, is another thing. This explains why Socrates demands that the good rulers be honored both while they are alive and after their death (414a1-4; cf. 347d4-8). Yet this incentive cannot affect the ruled. It is therefore with special regard to the ruled and more precisely to the soldiers, the strongest part of the city, that Socrates introduces at this point the noble lie *par excellence*; that noble lie is to bring about the maximum of caring for the city and for one another on the part of the ruled (415d3-4). The good city is not possible then without a fundamental falsehood; it cannot exist in the element of truth, of nature. The noble lie consists of two parts. The first part is meant to make the citizens forget the truth about their education or the true character of their becoming citizens out of mere human beings or out of what one may call natural human beings.⁴¹ It surely is meant to blur the distinction between nature and art and between nature and convention. It demands that the citizens regard themselves as children of one and the same mother and nurse, the earth, and hence as brothers, but in such a way that the earth is to be identified with a part of the earth, with the particular land or territory belonging to the particular city in question: the fraternity of all human beings is to be replaced by the fraternity of all fellow citizens. The second part of the noble lie qualifies this qualified fraternity by the fundamental inequality of the brothers; while the fraternity is traced to the earth, the inequality is traced to the god. If the god is the cause of all good things (380c8-9), inequality would seem to be a good thing. The god did not however create the brothers unequal by arbitrary decision, as it

⁴¹ Consider Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social* II 7 ("Du Législateur").

were choosing some for rule and others for subjection; he merely sanctioned a natural difference or put a stamp on it. One might expect that the god would at least guarantee what nature does not guarantee, namely, that the rulers generate only rulers, the soldiers only soldiers, and the farmers and craftsmen only farmers and craftsmen; but the god limits himself to demanding that the ignoble sons of noble fathers be relegated to a lower class and vice versa, *i.e.* that the natural order be respected without mercy. The division of the human race into independent self-sufficient cities is not simply natural; the order of rank within the city would be simply natural if it were divinely sanctioned with sufficient force. It is the second part of the noble lie which, by adding divine sanctions to the natural hierarchy, supplies the required incentive for the soldiers to obey the rulers and thus to serve the city wholeheartedly. Yet unless one ascribes a weight not warranted by the text to the divine sanction mentioned, one must admit that the suggested incentive is not sufficient. It is for this reason that Socrates introduces at this point the institution of communism: the incentive to justice still being insufficient, the opportunity for injustice must be removed. In the extremely brief discussion of communism regarding property the emphasis is on "housing": there will be no hiding places. Everyone is compelled always to live, if not in the open, at least within easy inspection: everyone may enter everyone else's dwelling at will. As reward for their service to the craftsmen proper the soldiers will not receive money of any kind but only a sufficient amount of food and of the other necessities. In the city of the armed camp there does not exist that approximation to the ring of Gyges which is the private home: no one can be happy through injustice because injustice, in order to be successful, requires a secrecy which is no longer possible.

In the good city as hitherto described justice then still depends on the lack of opportunity for injustice, as it does necessarily according to Glaucon's charge in his long speech; we have not yet come face to face with genuine justice. Hence, according to Glaucon's hope, we have not yet come face to face with genuine happiness. In other words, the coincidence of self-interest and the interest of the others or of the city, which was lost with the decay of the healthy city, has not yet been restored at least as far as the soldiers are concerned. The common people are the sheep, the soldiers are the dogs, and the rulers are the shepherds (416a2-7). But

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who are the owners? Who benefits from the whole enterprise? Who is made happy by it? No wonder that at the beginning of the fourth book the quiet and somewhat pedestrian Adeimantus, who is entirely oblivious of the joys of war and does not discern any peaceful activity of the soldiers which would be choiceworthy for its own sake, lodges an accusation against Socrates on behalf of the soldiers, the true owners of the city (419a2-4). Socrates defends himself as follows: we are concerned with the happiness of the city rather than with the happiness of any one section of it; we gave to each section that degree of happiness which is compatible with its specific service to the city or with its justice; we gave to each section of the city that degree of happiness which that section's nature requires or permits. But the section consists of individuals. It is not clear whether it is sufficient for the individual's happiness that the section to which he belongs is as happy as its political function permits, whether his happiness coincides with his complete dedication to the happiness of the city or with his justice, or whether he can reach a higher degree of happiness by being unjust. We must see whether it has become clear by the time that they begin to answer the question of whether genuine justice or genuine injustice is required for happiness (427d5-7).

Just as Glaucon had opposed the healthy city because its citizens lack the pleasures of the table, and not because they lack virtue, Adeimantus opposes the city of the armed camp because its citizens lack wealth, and not because they lack genuine justice. The incompleteness of the argument is matched by the incompleteness of the training of the interlocutors. The cure for the desire for the pleasures of the table was found in moderation. The cure for the desire for wealth must be found in justice. If the latter cure has been found by the time that they begin to answer the question of whether genuine justice is required for happiness, it was found much more easily than the former cure. The reason would be that wealth is much more political than the sensual pleasures: the city as city cannot eat and drink whereas it can own property. After Socrates has completed his defense against Adeimantus' charge, Adeimantus states the case for wealth, not indeed of the individuals, but of the city which needs wealth for waging war (422a4-7, b9, d8-e2). Through refuting that case Socrates completely overcomes Adeimantus' resistance to the city of the armed camp and therewith, it seems, completes the case for genuine justice. According to Socrates, one

substitute for wealth will be the policy of the good city to ally itself with the many poor in enemy cities against the few rich in them (423a3-5; cf. 471b2). But this is not the strongest medicine which the sternly anti-democratic Adeimantus, who is so averse to innovation (424d3-e4), is forced by Socrates to take. Socrates avails himself of the present opportunity to slip in the demand for communism regarding women and children. Even the necessity of innovation regarding songs (as distinguished from innovation regarding kinds of songs) (424c1-5) is imposed on Adeimantus. His accusation of Socrates had shown that the previously suggested safeguards are insufficient or that still more radical deviations from custom than hitherto stated are needed: the purgation of the feverish city requires the complete subversion of the city as hitherto known; it requires an act of what is thought to be the greatest injustice (cf. 426b9-c2). This radical change does not lose its character by the fact that the first, the most important, and the most resplendent legal establishments of the good city, *i.e.* those concerning divine worship, are left to the decision of the ancestral interpreter, *i.e.* to the god who is the ancestral interpreter regarding such matters for all human beings: to the Delphic Apollo, for if Apollo were only a Greek god, he could not perform this function for a city which is to be not only Greek but good as well.

After the founding of the good city is completed, Socrates and his friends turn to seeking where in it are justice and injustice and whether the man who is to be happy must possess justice or injustice. They surely succeed in stating what justice is. This is perhaps the strangest happening in the whole *Republic*. That Platonic dialogue which is devoted to the subject of justice answers the question of what justice is long before the first half of the work is finished, long before the most important facts without the consideration of which the essence of justice cannot be possibly determined in an adequate manner, have come to light, let alone have been duly considered. No wonder that the definition of justice at which the *Republic* arrives determines at most the genus to which justice belongs but not its specific difference (cf. 433a3). One cannot help contrasting the *Republic* with the other dialogues which raise the question of what a given virtue is; those other dialogues do not answer the question with which they deal; they are aporetic dialogues. The *Republic* appears to be a dialogue in which the truth is declared, a dogmatic dialogue. But since that truth is set forth on the basis of

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strikingly deficient evidence, one is compelled to say that the *Republic* is in fact as aporetic as the so-called aporetic dialogues. Why did Plato proceed in this manner in the dialogue treating justice as distinguished from the dialogues treating the other virtues? Justice, we may say, is the universal virtue, the virtue most obviously related to the city. The theme of the *Republic* is political in more than one sense, and the political questions of great urgency do not permit delay: the question of justice must be answered by all means even if all the evidence needed for an adequate answer is not yet in. The *Laches* begins with a question which is much more practical than the question "what is justice?", with the question of whether a certain kind of fighting is good or bad in combat. Since the military experts disagree, Socrates enters the discussion and shows, in a manner which at any rate in the eyes of those present is unobjectionable, that the question cannot be answered before they know what courage is; the discussion of what courage is does not lead to a result and hence the answer to the initial practical question is postponed indefinitely or rather the initial practical question is completely lost sight of. That question could safely be forgotten because it was neither very important nor very urgent; otherwise it would have been settled by the authority in charge without waiting for an adequate answer to the question of what courage is, and rightly so because there is no necessary connection between the two questions. Although the *Laches* leaves unanswered the question of what courage is, a careful reading of the dialogue would show that it answers that question at least as well as the *Republic* answers the question of what justice is. The distinction between aporetic dialogues and dialogues which convey a teaching is deceptive. To avoid deception, one would have to consider whether or not all dialogues which convey a teaching, and especially those in which Socrates is the chief speaker, are not carried on under a pressure comparable to the pressure operative in the *Republic*. For instance, the conversation which is reported in the *Phaedo* had to be completed because it takes place on the day of Socrates' death. As for the *Banquet*, one must not forget that the teaching conveyed therein is ascribed by Socrates to Diotima.

The premature investigation of what justice is becomes possible because the interlocutors accept Socrates' claim that the founding of the good city has been completed: can anything be lacking after the first, the most important, and the most resplendent things, i.e. the

crowning things, have been provided for? Thereupon Socrates demands from them with some justice that they should seek where in that city is justice and where in it is injustice. Yet Glaucon forces him, by reminding him of his promise to come to the assistance of justice, to participate, nay, to lead in that search. But the interlocutors are not aware that Socrates has changed the terms of his commitment or commission. He was supposed to prove that justice is choiceworthy for its own sake and not merely on account of its consequences, but he now declares the question to be whether in order to be happy a man must possess justice or injustice: justice may be an indispensable condition for happiness without being choiceworthy for its own sake, while being necessary only as a means or while being a necessary evil. Yet while the question of whether justice is good even in this restricted sense is said to be still entirely open, Socrates says immediately afterward that if the city which they have founded in speech is good, it must possess all virtues and justice among them, *i.e.* he takes it for granted that justice is good, or begs the decisive question. These moves succeed because Glaucon does not have a clear grasp of the issue; he is a well-wisher of justice but he is also perplexed by the speeches of the detractors of justice; he would like to believe that justice is the highest thing but he is aware of other things which do not seem to be lower than justice. Therefore when Socrates does not turn immediately to the search for justice but discusses first the other virtues, Glaucon's concern with the other virtues is sufficiently great to prevent him from protesting against Socrates' roundabout procedure (cf. 430d4-e1). One is not unjust to anyone if one notes that the beginning of the discussion of justice itself strangely lacks simplicity, and that justice seemed to be akin to simplicity.

Socrates and Glaucon look first for the three virtues other than justice. In the city which is founded according to nature, wisdom resides in the rulers and only in the rulers, for the wise men are by nature the smallest part of any city and it would not be good for the city if they were not at its helm. In the good city courage resides in the warriors, for political courage, as distinguished from brutish fearlessness, arises only through education in those by nature fitted for that courage. To find moderation is not quite so easy. If it is self-control regarding pleasures and desires, it is also the preserve of the rulers and warriors (431b9-d3). Yet it can also be understood to be the control of what is by nature worse by what is by nature

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better, *i.e.* that through which the whole is in harmony, or the agreement of the naturally superior and the naturally inferior as to which of the two ought to rule in the city; moderation thus understood pervades all parts of the good city. Even so, moderation lacks the simplicity and univocity of wisdom and of courage. Since controlling and being controlled differ, the moderation of the upper class differs from the moderation of the lower class. While Socrates and Glaucon find the three first virtues in the good city with ease, it is difficult for them to find justice in it; it seems to reside in a place difficult of access and lying in deep shadows; in fact, however, it was tumbling about their feet; they missed it because they looked for it far off. The difficulty of discovering justice in contradistinction to the other virtues reflects the fact that the education to justice in contradistinction to the other virtues has not been discussed. Justice proves to be the principle which guided the foundation of the good city from the very beginning, which was already effective in the healthy city although incompletely and which is, as we know, not yet completely effective in the city of the armed camp. Justice consists in everyone's doing the one thing pertaining to the city for which his nature is best fitted or simply in everyone's minding his own business: it is by virtue of justice thus understood that the three other virtues are virtues (433a-b). More precisely, a city is just if each of its three parts (the money-makers, the soldiers, and the rulers) does its own work and only its own work. Justice is then like moderation and unlike wisdom and courage not the preserve of a single part but required of every part. Hence justice, like moderation, has a different character in each of the three classes. One must assume, for instance, that the justice of the wise rulers is tinged by their wisdom (to say nothing of their peculiar incentive to justice) and the justice of the money-makers is colored by their vulgarity, for if even the courage of the warriors is only political or civic courage and not courage pure and simple (430c; cf. *Phaedo* 82a), it stands to reason that their justice too—to say nothing at all of the justice of the money-makers—will not be justice pure and simple. The courage of the warriors is not courage pure and simple because it is essentially dependent on law (cf. 429c7 with 412e6-8 and 413c5-7) or because they lack the highest responsibility. In order to discover justice pure and simple, it becomes necessary then to consider justice in the individual human being. This consideration would be easiest if justice in the individual were identical with justice in the city; this

would require that the individual or rather his soul consist of the same three kinds of "natures" as the city. We note that the parallel between the city and the individual by which the good city stands or falls, demands the abstraction from the body (cf. the transition from the individual to the soul in 434d-435c). A provisional consideration of the soul seems to establish the requirement mentioned: the soul contains desire, spiritedness or anger (440a5, c2), and reason, just as the city consists of the money-makers, the warriors, and the rulers. Hence we may conclude that a man is just if each of these three parts of the soul does its own work and only its own work, *i.e.* if his soul is in a state of health. But if justice is health of the soul and conversely injustice is disease of the soul, it is obvious that justice is good and injustice is bad, regardless of whether or not one is known to be just or unjust (444d-445b). A man is just if the rational part of his soul is wise and rules (441e) and if the spirited part, being the subject and ally of the rational part, assists it in controlling the multitude of desires which become almost inevitably desires for more and ever more money. This means however that only the man in whom reason properly cultivated rules the two other parts properly cultivated, *i.e.* only the wise man, can be truly just (cf. 442c); the soul cannot be healthy if one of its parts, and especially its best part is atrophied. No wonder then that the just man eventually proves to be identical with the philosopher (580d-583b). And the philosopher can be just without being a member of the just city. The money-makers and the warriors are not truly just because their justice derives exclusively from habituation of one kind or another as distinguished from philosophy; hence in the deepest recesses of their souls they long for tyranny, *i.e.* for complete injustice (619b-d). We see then how right Socrates was when he expected to find injustice in the good city (427d). This is not to deny of course that as members of the good city the non-philosophers would act much more justly than they do as members of the actual cities.

The justice of those who are not wise appears in a different light in the consideration of justice in the city on the one hand and in the consideration of justice in the soul on the other. This fact shows that the parallel between the city and the soul is misleading. That parallel is defective because the definition of justice which supports it is defective. Justice is said to consist in each part of the city or of the soul "doing the work for which it is best fitted by nature" or in

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a "kind" of this; a part of the city or of the soul is said to be just if it does its work or minds its own business "in a certain manner." The indefiniteness is removed if one replaces "in a certain manner" by "in the best manner" or simply by "well" (433a-b, 443c4-d7; Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1098a7-12). If each part of the city does its work well, and hence has the virtue or virtues belonging to it, the city is wise, courageous, and moderate and therewith perfectly good: it does not need justice in addition. The case of the individual is different. If he is wise, courageous, and moderate, he is not yet perfectly good; for his goodness toward his fellows, his willingness to help them, to care for them, or to serve them (412d13), as distinguished from unwillingness to harm them, does not follow from his possessing the three first virtues. The three first virtues are sufficient for the city because the city is self-sufficient, and they are insufficient for the individual because the individual is not self-sufficient. It is because justice as a distinct virtue is superfluous in the case of the good city that Socrates and Glaucon have difficulty in seeing it when they look for it.

The parallel between the city and the soul requires that just as in the city the warriors occupy a higher rank than the money-makers, in the soul spiritedness occupy a higher rank than desire (440e2-7). It is very plausible that those who uphold the city against foreign and domestic enemies and who have received a music education should be more highly respected than those who lack public responsibility as well as music education. But it is much less plausible that spiritedness as such should be higher in rank than desire as such. It is true that spiritedness includes a large variety of phenomena ranging from the most noble indignation about injustice, turpitude, and meanness down to the anger of a spoiled child who resents being deprived of anything, however bad, that he desires (cf. 441a7-b2). But it is also clear that the same holds of desire: one kind of desire is *eros*, which ranges in its healthy forms from the longing for immortality through offspring via the longing for immortality through fame to the longing for immortality through participation by knowledge in the things which are unchangeable in every respect. The assertion that spiritedness as such is higher in rank than desire as such is then questionable. Although or because Glaucon denies it with an oath, spiritedness does conspire with desire against reason (440b4-8). Let us also never forget that while there is a philosophic *eros*, there is no

philosophic indignation, desire for victory, or anger. (Consider 536b8-c7.) The parallel of the city and the soul is based on a deliberate abstraction from *eros*, an abstraction characteristic of the *Republic*. This abstraction shows itself most strikingly in two facts: when Socrates mentions the fundamental needs which give rise to human society, he is silent about the need for procreation, and when he describes the tyrant, he presents him as *Eros* incarnate (573b-e, 574d-575a). This is to say nothing of the fact that the *Republic* almost opens with a curse on *eros* (329b6-d1). In the thematic discussion of the respective rank of spiritedness and desire, Socrates is silent about *eros*.⁴² It seems that there is a tension between *eros* and the city and hence between *eros* and justice: only through the depreciation of *eros* can the city come into its own. *Eros* obeys its own laws, not the laws of the city however good; lovers are not necessarily fellow citizens (or fellow party-members); in the good city *eros* is simply subjected to the requirements of the city: only those are permitted to join each other for procreation who promise to bring forth the right kind of offspring. The abolition of privacy is a blow struck at *eros*. The city is not an erotic association although in a way it presupposes erotic associations. There is not an erotic class of the city as there are classes of rulers, warriors, and money-makers. The city does not procreate as it deliberates, wages wars, and owns property. As far as possible, patriotism, dedication to the common good, justice, must take the place of *eros*, and patriotism has a closer kinship to spiritedness, eagerness to fight, "waspishness," indignation, and anger than to *eros*. Both the erotic association and the political association are exclusive, but they are exclusive in different ways: the lovers seclude themselves from the others (from "the world") without opposition to the others or hate of the others, but the city cannot be said to seclude itself from "the world": it separates itself from others by opposing or resisting them; the opposition of "We and They" is essential to the political association. The superiority of spiritedness to desire seems to be shown by the fact that every act of human spiritedness seems to include a sense that one is in the right (440c). A considerable part

⁴² Cf. 439d6. Cf. the similar procedure in the *Timaeus* where the thesis asserting the superiority of spiritedness to desire is repeated with the consequence that original man, man as he left the hands of his Maker, is (*sit venia verbo*) a sexless male; cf. 69d-71a and 72e-73a with 91a-d; cf. also 88a8-b2.

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of the acts of justice are acts of punishment, and punishment is, to say the least, assisted by anger.⁴³ Anger is so much concerned with right that it treats even lifeless things as if they could do wrong; spiritedness is more apt to "personify" its objects than desire (cf. 440a1-3; 469e1-2). But whether this fact establishes a simple superiority of spiritedness to desire depends on what we have to think about the worth of "personification." The *Republic* supplies food for thought on this subject especially through the presentation of Glaucon, the most spirited speaker in the work, who as Spiritedness incarnate comes to the assistance of Reason in the founding of the just city. What was said about the abstraction from *eros* in the *Republic* is not contradicted by the fact that the education of the warriors is meant to culminate in the *eros* of the beautiful; that *eros* points to the philosophic *eros*, the *eros* peculiar to the philosophers (501d2), which becomes quest for knowledge of the idea of the good, an idea higher than the idea of justice. The *Republic* could unqualifiedly abstract from *eros* only if it could abstract from philosophy. But there is a tension between philosophy and the city; on the level of this tension, the tension between *eros* and justice recurs. The *Republic* claims that the tension between philosophy and the city would be overcome if the philosophers become kings. We must investigate whether it is in fact overcome. We are guided toward this investigation by that qualified abstraction from *eros* which we have pointed out.

The good city is characterized above all by the rule of those best in philosophy and with regard to war (543a5)—of those who come closest to the virgin goddess Athena (*Timaeus* 24c7-d1), to a goddess who, in addition, was not formed in a womb. The good city is therefore characterized by the pre-eminence of reason and spiritedness as distinguished from *eros* in the primary sense. Prior to the emergence of philosophy the good city is characterized by the facts that it attributes a higher rank to spiritedness than to desire and that it is a city of artisans. There is a connection between these two facts. The arts are unerotic. They are unerotic because they are concerned with producing useful things, i.e. particular goods (428d12-e1), or means, whereas *eros* tends toward the complete good. Yet because of their partial character the arts are ministerial to the art of arts and call for it. The art of arts, i.e.

⁴³ Cf. *Laws* 731b3-d5.

philosophy, is concerned with the complete good simply, "the idea of the good." Just as art, *eros* points to philosophy as to its highest form. Toward philosophy, art and *eros*, the most pedestrian or utilitarian and the least utilitarian, manifestly converge. That spiritedness should also tend toward philosophy is, to say the least, less manifest."⁴

The founding of the good city started from the fact that men are by nature different and this proved to mean that they are by nature of unequal rank. They are unequal in the first place with regard to their abilities to acquire virtue. The inequality which is due to nature is increased and deepened by the different kinds of education or habituation and the different ways of life (communitistic or non-communitistic) which the different parts of the good city enjoy. As a result, the good city comes to resemble a caste society. A Platonic character who hears the account of the good city of the *Republic* is reminded by it of the caste system established in ancient Egypt, although it is quite clear that in Egypt the rulers were priests and not philosophers (*Timaeus* 24a-b). Yet in the good city of the *Republic*, not descent but everyone's natural gifts determine to which class he will belong. But this leads to a difficulty. The members of the upper class which lives communistically are not supposed to know who their natural parents are, for they are supposed to regard all men and women belonging to the older generation of the upper class as their parents. On the other hand, the gifted children of the non-communist lower class are to be transferred to the upper class (and vice versa); since their superior gifts are not necessarily recognizable at the moment of their birth, they may come to know their natural parents and even become attached to them; this would seem to unfit them for transfer to the upper class. There are three ways in which this difficulty can be overcome. The first is to make post-natal selection superfluous by guaranteeing the desired result through the right selection of parents, and this means of course of upper-class parents: every child of the properly chosen parents is fit to belong to the upper class. This is the solution underlying Socrates' discussion of the nuptial number (546c6-d3). The second way is to extend communism and—considering the connection between way of life and education—

⁴ This difficulty is adumbrated most impressively at the end of the *Laws* (963e). Cf. the preceding note.

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music education to the lower class (401b-c, 421e-422d, 460a, 543a). According to Aristotle (*Politics* 1284a13-17) Socrates has left it undecided whether in the good city absolute communism is limited to the upper class or extends also to the lower class. To leave this question undecided would be in agreement with Socrates' professed low opinion of the importance of the lower class (421a, 434a). The ambiguity regarding music education is due in other words to the anticipatory comparison of music education with the highest education, compared with which the difference between the education of the warriors and that of the money-makers becomes insignificant. Yet from any point of view but the highest that difference is of course very important. One must not forget that the class of money-makers, to say the least, contains those who lack good natures but are curable so that they do not have to be killed (410a1-4, 456d8-10). Accordingly Socrates alludes to the need for untrue stories to be addressed, not to the warriors, but to those insensitive to the beautiful or to honor, i.e. to the need for terrifying or punitive lies (386c1, 387b4-c3), for the multitude wholly deprived of political power would seem to be in the greatest need of incentives for obeying the rulers wholeheartedly. There can then be only little doubt that Socrates wishes to limit communism and music education to the upper class (398b2-4, 415eff., 431b4-d3). Therefore, in order to remove the difficulty under discussion, he can hardly avoid making an individual's belonging to the upper or lower class hereditary and thus violating one of the most elementary principles of justice. Apart from this, one may wonder whether a perfectly clear line between the gifted and those not gifted for the profession of warriors can be drawn, hence whether a perfectly just assignment of the individuals to the upper or lower class is possible, and hence whether the good city can be simply just (cf. 427d). In addition, if communism is limited to the upper class, there will be privacy both in the money-making class and among the philosophers as philosophers, for there may very well be only a single philosopher in the city and surely never a herd or a platoon: the warriors are the only class which is entirely political or public or entirely dedicated to the city; the warriors alone therefore present the clearest case of the just life in one sense of the word "just."

It is necessary to understand why communism is limited to the upper class or what the natural obstacle to communism is. That which is by nature private or a man's own is the body and only the

body (464d; cf. *Laws* 739c). The most complete communism would therefore require complete abstraction from the body. The approximation to communism pure and simple which is demanded in the *Republic*, and which we have called absolute communism, requires an approximation to the complete abstraction from the body. The needs or desires of the body induce men to extend the sphere of the private, of what is each man's own, as far as they can. This most powerful striving is countered by music education which brings about moderation, i.e. by a most severe training of the soul of which, it seems, only a minority of men is capable. Yet this kind of education does not extirpate the natural desire of each for things (and human beings) of his own: the warriors will not accept absolute communism if they are not subject to the philosophers. It thus becomes clear that the striving for one's own is countered ultimately only by philosophy, by the quest for truth which as such cannot be anyone's private possession. Whereas the private *par excellence* is the body, the common *par excellence* is the mind, the pure mind, rather than the soul in general, for only pure thoughts can be simply identical and known to be simply identical in different individuals. The superiority of communism to non-communism as taught in the *Republic* is intelligible only as a reflection of the superiority of philosophy to non-philosophy. Yet while philosophy is the most common, it is also, as was indicated in the preceding paragraph, the most private. While in one respect the warriors' life is the just life *par excellence*, in another respect only the philosopher's life is just. The distinction between two meanings of justice which is implied cannot become clear before one has understood the teaching of the *Republic* regarding the relation of philosophy and the city. We must therefore make a new beginning.

At the end of the fourth book it looks as if Socrates had completed the task which Glaucon and Adeimantus had imposed on him, for he had shown that justice as health of the soul is desirable not only because of its consequences but above all for its own sake. But then, at the beginning of the fifth book, we are suddenly confronted by a new beginning, by the repetition of a scene which had occurred at the very beginning. Both at the very beginning and at the beginning of the fifth book (and nowhere else), Socrates' companions make a decision, nay, take a vote, and Socrates, who had no share in the decision, obeys it (cf. 449b-450a with 327c-328b3). Socrates' companions behave in both cases like a city (an assembly

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of citizens), if of the smallest possible city (369d11-12). But there is this decisive difference between the two scenes: whereas Thrasy-machus was absent from the first scene, he has become a member of the city in the second scene. It would seem that the foundation of the good city requires that Thrasy-machus be converted into one of its citizens.

At the beginning of the fifth book Socrates' companions force him to take up the subject of communism in regard to women and children. They do not object to the proposal itself in the way in which Adeimantus had objected to the communism regarding property at the beginning of the fourth book, for even Adeimantus is no longer the same man he was at that time. They only wish to know the precise manner in which communism regarding women and children is to be managed. Socrates replaces the question raised by these more incisive questions: (1) is that communism possible? (2) is it desirable? It appears that communism regarding women is the consequence or the presupposition of the equality of the two sexes concerning the work they must do: the city cannot afford to lose half of its adult population from its working and fighting force, and there is no essential difference regarding natural gifts for the various arts between men and women. The demand for equality of the two sexes requires a complete upheaval of custom, an upheaval which is here presented less as shocking than as laughable; the demand is justified on the ground that only the useful is fair or noble and that only what is bad, *i.e.* against nature, is laughable; the customary difference of conduct between the two sexes is rejected as being against nature, and the revolutionary change suggested is meant to bring about the order according to nature (456c1-3). For justice requires that every human being should practice the art for which he or she is fitted by nature, regardless of what custom or convention may dictate. Socrates shows first that the equality of the two sexes is possible, *i.e.* in agreement with the nature of the two sexes as their nature appears when viewed with regard to its aptitude for the practice of the various arts, and then that it is desirable. In proving the possibility he explicitly abstracts from the difference between the sexes in regard to procreation. As we must repeat, this means that that argument of the *Republic* as a whole, according to which the city is a community of male and female artisans, abstracts to the highest degree possible from that activity essential to the city which takes place "by nature" and not

"by art"; it means at the same time that it abstracts from the most important bodily difference within the human race, *i.e.* it abstracts as much as possible from the body: the difference between men and women is treated as if it were comparable to the difference between bald and long-haired men (454c-e). Socrates turns then to the communism regarding women and children and shows that it is desirable because it would make the city more "one" and hence more perfect than a city consisting of separate families would be: the city should be as similar as possible to a single human being, or to a single living body (462c10-d7, 464b2), *i.e.* to a natural being. The political argument which is directed toward the greatest possible unity of the city conceals the trans-political argument which is directed toward the naturalness of the city. The abolition of the family does not mean of course the introduction of license or promiscuity; it means the most severe regulation of sexual intercourse from the point of view of what is useful for the city or what is required for the common good. The consideration of the useful, one might say, supersedes the consideration of the sacred (458e4): human males and females are to be copulated with exclusive regard to the production of the best offspring in the spirit in which the breeders of dogs, birds, and horses proceed; the claims of *eros* are simply silenced; the new order naturally affects the customary prohibitions against incest, the most sacred rules of customary justice (cf. 461b-e). In the new scheme no one will know any more his natural parents, children, brothers and sisters but everyone will regard all men and women of the older generation as his fathers and mothers, of his own generation as his brothers and sisters, and of the younger generation as his children (463c). This means however that the city constructed according to nature lives in a most important respect more according to convention than according to nature. For this reason we are disappointed to see that while Socrates takes up the question of whether communism regarding women and children is possible, he drops it immediately (466d6ff.). It looks as if it were too much even for Socrates to prove that possibility, given the fact that men seem to desire naturally to have children of their own (cf. 330c3-4; 467a10-b1). Since the institution in question is indispensable for the good city, Socrates thus leaves open the question of the possibility of the good city, *i.e.* of the just city, as such. And this happens to his listeners, and to the readers of the *Republic*, after they have brought the greatest sacri-

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fices—such as the sacrifice of *eros* as well as of the family—for the sake of justice.

Socrates is not for long allowed to escape from his awesome duty to answer the question of the possibility of the just city. The manly or rather spirited Glaucon compels him to face that question. Perhaps we should say that by apparently escaping to the subject of war—a subject both easier in itself and more attractive to Glaucon than the communism regarding women and children—yet treating that subject according to the stern demands of justice and thus depriving it of much of its attractiveness, he compels Glaucon to compel him to return to the fundamental question. Perhaps we should also say that Socrates does not truly run away from the subject of communism regarding women and children or of the equality of the two sexes by turning to the subject of war, since the only relevant difference between the two sexes was said to be that men are stronger than women (451e1–2, 455e1–2, 456a10–11, 457a9–10), a difference most relevant for fighting, and the death of female fighters is a graver loss for the city than the death of male fighters given the different function of the two sexes in procreation; besides, war may be said to prepare the abolition of the family. Be this as it may, the question to which they return is not the same which they left. The question which they left was whether the good city is possible in the sense that it is in agreement with human nature. The question to which they return is whether the good city is possible in the sense that it can be brought into being by the transformation of an actual city. The latter question might be thought to presuppose the affirmative answer to the first question, but this is not quite correct. As we learn now, our whole effort to find out what justice is (so that we will be enabled to see how it is related to happiness) was a quest for “justice itself” as a “pattern.” By seeking for justice as a pattern we imply that the just man and the just city will not be perfectly just but will indeed approximate justice itself with particular closeness (472a–b): only justice itself is perfectly just (479a; cf. 538c^{ff.}). We thus learn that not even the characteristic institutions of the good city (absolute communism, equality of the sexes, and the rule of philosophers) are simply just. Justice itself is not “possible” in the sense that it is capable of coming into being because it is always without being capable of undergoing any change whatever. Justice is a “form” or an “idea,” one of many “ideas.” Ideas are the only things which strictly speak-

ing "are," *i.e.* are without any admixture of non-being; they are beyond all becoming and whatever is becoming is between being and non-being. Since the ideas are the only things which are beyond all change, they are in a sense the cause of all change. For instance, the idea of justice is the cause of anything (human beings, cities, laws, commands, actions) having become just. They are self-subsisting beings which subsist always. They are of the utmost splendor. For instance, the idea of justice is perfectly just. But this splendor escapes the eyes of the body. The ideas are "visible" only to the eye of the mind, and the mind as mind perceives nothing but ideas. Yet, as is indicated by the facts that there are many ideas and that the mind which perceives the ideas is radically different from the ideas themselves, there must be something higher than the ideas: the idea of the good, which is in a sense the cause of all ideas as well as of the mind perceiving them (517c1-5). Plato and Aristotle agree that in the highest, the perfect knower and the perfect known must be united; but whereas according to Aristotle the highest is knowledge or thought thinking itself, according to Plato the highest is beyond the difference between knower and known or is not a thinking being. It also becomes questionable whether the highest as Plato understands it is still properly called an idea; Socrates uses "the idea of the good" and "the good" synonymously (505a2-b3). It is only through the perception of the good on the part of properly equipped human beings that the good city can come into being and subsist for a while.

The doctrine of ideas which Socrates expounds to his interlocutors is very hard to understand; to begin with, it is utterly incredible, not to say that it appears to be fantastic. Hitherto we had been given to understand that justice is fundamentally a certain character of the human soul or of the city, *i.e.* something which is not self-subsisting. Now we are asked to believe that it is self-subsisting, being at home as it were in an entirely different place from human beings and everything else participating in justice (cf. 509d1-510a7; *Phaedrus* 247c3). No one has ever succeeded in giving a satisfactory or clear account of this doctrine of ideas. It is possible however to define rather precisely the central difficulty. "Idea" means primarily the looks or shape of a thing; it means then a kind or class of things which are united by the fact that they all possess the same looks, the same character or power, or the same "nature"; therewith it means the class-character or the nature of the things belonging to

the class in question: the idea of a thing is that which we seek when we try to find out the "What" or the "nature" of a thing or a class of things. The connection between "idea" and "nature" appears in the *Republic* from the facts that "the idea of justice" is called "that which is just by nature" (501b2) and the ideas in contradistinction to the things which are not ideas are said to be "in nature" (597b5-e4). This does not explain however why the ideas are presented as "separated" from the things which are what they are by participating in an idea, or, in other words, why "dogness" (the class character of dogs) should be "the true dog." It seems that two kinds of phenomena lend support to Socrates' assertion. In the first place, the mathematical things as such can never be found among sensible things; no line drawn on sand or paper is a line as meant by the mathematician. Secondly and above all, what we mean by justice and kindred things is not as such in its purity or perfection necessarily found in human beings or societies; it rather seems that what is meant by justice transcends everything which men ever achieve; precisely the justest men were and are the ones most aware of the shortcomings of their justice. Socrates seems to say that what is patently true of mathematical things and of the virtues is true universally: there is an idea of the bed or of the table as of the circle and of justice. Now while it is obviously reasonable to say that a perfect circle or perfect justice transcends everything which can be seen, it is hard to say that a perfect bed is something on which no man can ever rest or that a perfect howl is completely inaudible. However this may be, Glaucon and Adeimantus accept this doctrine of ideas with relative ease. They surely have heard of the ideas, even of the idea of the good, many times before. This does not guarantee however that they have a genuine understanding of that doctrine.⁴⁵ Yet they have heard still more frequently, and in a way they know, that there are gods like *Dike* (536b3; cf. 487a6), or *Nike* who is not this victory or that victory, nor this or that statue of *Nike*, but one and the same self-subsisting being which is in a sense the cause of every victory and which is of unbelievable splendor. More generally, Glaucon and Adeimantus know that there are gods—self-subsisting beings which are the cause of everything good, which are of unbelievable splendor, and which cannot be apprehended by the senses since they never change their "form" (cf.

⁴⁵ 505a2-3, 507a8-9, 509a6-8, 532d2-5, 533a1-2, 596a5-9, 597a8-9.

379a-b and 380dff.). This is not to deny that there is a profound difference between the gods as understood in the theology of the *Republic* and the ideas. It is merely to assert that those who have come to accept that theology are best prepared for accepting the doctrine of ideas. The movement to which the reader of the *Republic* is exposed leads from the city as the association of the fathers who are subject to the law and ultimately to the gods toward the city as an association of artisans who are subject to the philosophers and ultimately to the ideas.

We must now return to the question of the possibility of the just city. We have learned that justice is not "possible" in the sense that it can come into being. We learn immediately afterwards that not only justice itself but also the just city is not "possible" in the sense indicated. This does not mean that the just city as meant and as outlined in the *Republic* is an idea like justice itself and still less that it is an ideal: "ideal" is not a Platonic term. The just city is not a self-subsisting being like the idea of justice, located so to speak in a super-heavenly place. Its status is rather like that of a perfectly beautiful human being as painted which is only by virtue of the painter's painting; it is akin to that of Glaucon's statues of the perfectly just man who is thought to be perfectly unjust and of the perfectly unjust man who is thought to be perfectly just; more precisely, the just city is only "in speech": it "is" only by virtue of having been figured out with a view to justice itself or to what is by nature right on the one hand and the human all too human on the other. Although the just city is of decidedly lower rank than justice itself, even the just city as a pattern is not capable of coming into being as it has been blueprinted; only approximations to it can be expected in cities which are in deed and not merely in speech (472b1-473b3; cf. 500c2-501c9 with 484c6-d3 and 592b2-3). It is not clear what this means. Does it mean that the best possible solution will be a compromise so that we must become reconciled to a certain degree of private property (e.g. that we must permit every soldier to keep his shoes and the like as long as he lives) and a certain degree of inequality of the sexes (e.g. that certain military and administrative functions will remain a preserve of the male warriors)? There is no reason to suppose that this is what Socrates meant. In the light of the succeeding part of the conversation the following suggestion would seem to be plausible. The assertion according to which the just city cannot come into

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being as blueprinted is provisional or prepares the assertion according to which the just city, while capable of coming into being as blueprinted, is very unlikely to do so. At any rate immediately after having declared that only an approximation to the good city can reasonably be expected, Socrates raises the question, Which feasible change in the actual cities would be the necessary and sufficient condition of their transformation into good cities. His answer is that that condition is the "coincidence" of political power and philosophy: the philosophers must rule as kings or the kings must genuinely and adequately philosophize. That coincidence will bring about "the cessation of evil," i.e. both private and public happiness (473c11-e5). No less than this must be possible if justice as full dedication to the city is to be choiceworthy for its own sake; this condition can be fulfilled only if the city is of consummate goodness, i.e. such as to bring about the happiness of "the human race." One even begins to wonder whether the coincidence of philosophy and political power is not only the necessary but the sufficient condition of universal happiness, i.e. whether absolute communism and the equality of the sexes are still at all necessary. Socrates' answer is not altogether surprising. If justice is giving or leaving to each what is good for his soul but what is good for the soul is the virtues, it follows that no man can be truly just who does not know "the virtues themselves" or generally the ideas, or who is not a philosopher.

By answering the question of how the good city is possible, Socrates introduces philosophy as a theme of the *Republic*. This means that in the *Republic* philosophy is not introduced as the end of man but as a means for realizing justice and therefore the just city, the city as armed camp which is characterized by absolute communism and equality of the sexes in the upper class, the class of warriors. Since the rule of philosophers is not introduced as an ingredient of the just city but only as a means for its realization, Aristotle legitimately disregards this institution in his critical analysis of the *Republic*. Philosophy is introduced in the context of the question of the possibility, as distinguished from the question of the desirability, of the city of the armed camp. The question of possibility—of what is conformable to nature and in particular to the nature of man—did not arise in regard to the healthy city. The question of possibility came to the fore only at the beginning of the fifth book as a consequence of an intervention initiated by Polemarchus. The two earlier comparable interventions—that of Glaucon

after the description of the healthy city and that of Adeimantus after the abolition of private property and of privacy altogether—were limited to the question of desirability: Polemarchus is more important for the action of the *Republic* than one might desire.⁴⁶ He supplies an indispensable corrective to the action of the two brothers and especially of Glaucon. As a remote consequence of Polemarchus' action Socrates succeeds in reducing the question of the possibility of the just city to the question of the possibility of the coincidence of philosophy and political power. That such a coincidence should be possible is to begin with most incredible: everyone can see that the philosophers are useless, if not even harmful, in politics. Socrates, who had experiences of his own with his own city—experiences to be crowned by his capital punishment—regards this accusation of the philosophers as well-founded, although in need of deeper exploration. He traces the antagonism of the cities to the philosophers primarily to the cities: the present cities, i.e. the cities not ruled by philosophers, are like assemblies of madmen which corrupt most of those fit to become philosophers, and to which those who have succeeded against all odds in becoming philosophers rightly turn their backs in disgust. But Socrates is far from absolving the philosophers altogether. Only a radical change on the part of both the cities and the philosophers can bring about that harmony between them for which they seem to be meant by nature. The change consists precisely in this, that the cities become willing to be ruled by philosophers and the philosophers become willing to rule the cities. This coincidence of philosophy and political power is very difficult to achieve, very improbable, but not impossible. To bring about the needed change on the part of the city, of the non-philosophers or the multitude, the right kind of persuasion is necessary and sufficient. The right kind of persuasion is supplied by the art of persuasion, the art of Thrasymachus, directed by the philosopher and in the service of philosophy. No wonder then that in this context Socrates declares that he and Thrasymachus have just become friends, having not been enemies before either. The multitude of the non-philosophers is good-natured and therefore persuadable. Without "Thrasymachus" there will never be a just city. We are compelled to expel Homer and Sophocles but we must invite Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus justly occu-

⁴⁶ Cf. Socrates' praise of Polemarchus in the *Phaedrus* 257b3-4.

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pies the central place among the interlocutors of the *Republic*, the place between the pair consisting of the father and the son and the pair consisting of the brothers. Socrates and Thrasymachus "have just become friends" because Socrates had just said that in order to escape destruction, the city must not permit philosophizing, and especially that philosophizing which is concerned with "speeches," to the young, i.e. the gravest kind of "corrupting the young"; Adeimantus believes that Thrasymachus will be passionately opposed to this proposal; but Socrates who knows better holds that by making that proposal he has become the friend of Thrasymachus who is or plays the city. After having become the friend of Thrasymachus, Socrates turns to vindicating the many against the charge that they cannot be persuaded of the worth of philosophy or to taming the many (497d8-498d4, 499d8-500a8, 501c4-502a4). His success with the many however is not genuine since they are not present or since the many whom he tames are not the many in deed but only the many in speech; he lacks the art of taming the many in deed which is only the reverse side of the art of arousing the many to anger, that single art which is the art of Thrasymachus. The many will have to be addressed by Thrasymachus and he who has listened to Socrates will succeed.

But if this is so why did not the philosophers of old, to say nothing of Socrates himself, succeed in persuading the multitude, directly or through such intermediaries as Thrasymachus, of the supremacy of philosophy and the philosophers and thus bring about the rule of the philosophers and therewith the salvation and the happiness of their cities? Strange as it may sound, in this part of the conversation it appears easier to persuade the multitude to accept the rule of the philosophers than to persuade the philosophers to rule the multitude: the philosophers cannot be persuaded, they can only be compelled to rule the cities (499b-c, 500d4-5, 520a-d, 521b7, 539e2-3). Only the non-philosophers could compel the philosophers to take care of the city. But, given the prejudice against the philosophers, this compulsion will not be forthcoming if the philosophers do not in the first place persuade the non-philosophers to compel the philosophers to rule over them, and this persuasion will not be forthcoming, given the philosophers' unwillingness to rule. We arrive then at the conclusion that the just city is not possible because of the philosophers' unwillingness to rule.

Why are the philosophers unwilling to rule? Being dominated

by the desire, the *eros*, for knowledge as the one thing needful, or knowing that philosophy is the most pleasant and blessed possession, the philosophers have no leisure for looking down at human affairs, let alone for taking care of them. They believe that while still alive they are already firmly settled far away from their cities in the "Islands of the Blessed." Hence only compulsion could induce them to take part in public life in the just city, i.e. in the city which regards the proper upbringing of the philosophers as its most important task. Having perceived the truly grand, the philosophers regard the human things as paltry. Their very justice—their abstaining from wronging their fellow human beings—flows from contempt for the things for which the non-philosophers hotly contest. They know that the life not dedicated to philosophy and therefore even political life at its best is like life in a cave, so much so that the city can be identified with the Cave.⁴⁷ The cave-dwellers, i.e. the non-philosophers, see only the shadows of artifacts (514b–515c). That is to say, whatever they perceive they understand in the light of opinions sanctified by the fiat of legislators, regarding the just and noble things, i.e. of fabricated or conventional opinions, and they do not know that these their most cherished convictions possess no higher status than that of opinions. For if even the best city stands or falls by a fundamental falsehood, albeit a noble falsehood, it can be expected that the opinions on which the imperfect cities rest or in which they believe will not be true, to say the least. Precisely the best of the non-philosophers, the good citizens, are passionately attached to these opinions and therefore passionately opposed to philosophy (517a) which is the attempt to go beyond opinion toward knowledge: the multitude is not as persuadable by the philosophers as we sanguinely assumed in an earlier part of the argument. This is the true reason why the coincidence of philosophy and political power is extremely improbable: philosophy and the city tend away from one another in opposite directions.

The difficulty of overcoming the natural tension between the city and the philosophers induces Socrates to turn from the question whether the just city is "possible" in the sense of being conformable to human nature, to the question of whether the just city is "possible" in the sense of being capable of being brought to light by the transformation of an actual city. The first question, understood

⁴⁷ 485b, 486a–b, 496c6, 499c1, 501d1–5, 517c7–9, 519c2–d7, 539e.

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in contradistinction to the second, points to the question whether the just city could not come into being through the settling together of men who were before wholly unassociated. To this question Socrates tacitly gives a negative answer by turning to the question of whether the just city could be brought into being by the transformation of an actual city. The good city cannot be brought to light out of human beings who have not yet undergone any human discipline, out of "primitives" or "stupid animals" or "savages" cruel or gentle—the good city cannot be brought to light out of the healthy city of the *Republic*; the potential members of the good city must already have acquired the rudiments of civilized life; the process of long duration during which pre-political men become political men cannot be the work of the founder or legislator of the good city but is presupposed by him (cf. 376e2–4). But on the other hand, if the potential good city must be an old city, its citizens will have become thoroughly moulded by the imperfect laws or customs of their city, hallowed by antiquity, and will have become passionately attached to them. Socrates is therefore compelled to revise his original suggestion according to which the rule of the philosophers is the necessary and sufficient condition for the coming into being of the just city. Whereas he had originally suggested that the good city will come into being if the philosophers become kings, he finally suggests that the good city will come into being if, when the philosophers have become kings, they expel everyone older than ten from the city, i.e. separate the children completely from their parents and their parents' ways and bring them up in the entirely novel ways of the good city (540d–541b; cf. 499b; 501a,e). By taking over a city, the philosophers make sure that their subjects will not be savages; by expelling everyone older than ten, they make sure that their subjects will not be enslaved by any traditional civility. The solution is elegant but it leaves one wondering how the philosophers can compel everyone older than ten to obey submissively the command decreeing the expulsion and the separation, since they cannot yet have trained a warrior class absolutely obedient to them. This is not to deny that Socrates could have persuaded many fine young men, and not a few old ones, not indeed to leave the city and to live in the fields, but to believe that the multitude could be, not indeed compelled, but persuaded by the philosophers to leave their city and their children to the philosophers and to live in the fields so that justice will be done.

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The just city is then impossible. It is impossible because it is against nature. It is against nature that there should ever be a "cessation of evils," "for it is necessary that there should always be something opposed to the good, and evil necessarily wanders about the mortal nature and the region here."⁴⁸ It is against nature that rhetoric should have the power ascribed to it: that it should be able to overcome the resistance rooted in men's love of their own and ultimately in the body; as Aristotle puts it, the soul can rule the body only despotically, not by persuasion; the *Republic* repeats, in order to overcome it, the error of the sophists regarding the power of speech. The just city is against nature because the equality of the sexes and absolute communism are against nature. It holds no attraction for anyone except for such lovers of justice as are willing to destroy the family as something essentially conventional and to exchange it for a society in which no one knows of parents, children, and brothers and sisters who are not conventional. The *Republic* would not be the work which it is if this kind of lover of justice were not the most outstanding kind in the practically most important sense of justice. Or to state this in a manner which is perhaps more easily intelligible today, the *Republic* conveys the broadest and deepest analysis of political idealism ever made.

That part of the *Republic* which deals with philosophy is the most important part of the book. Accordingly it transmits the answer to the question regarding justice to the extent to which that answer is given in the *Republic*. The just man, we recall, is the man in whom each part of the soul does its work well. But only in the philosopher does the best part of the soul, reason, do its work well, and this is not possible if the two other parts of the soul do not do their work well also: the philosopher is necessarily by nature both courageous and moderate (487a2-5). Only the philosopher can be truly just. But the work with which the philosopher is concerned above everything else is intrinsically attractive and in fact the most pleasant work, regardless of what consequences it may entail (583a). Hence only in philosophy do justice and happiness coincide. In other words, the philosopher is the only individual who is just in the sense in which the city can be just: he is self-sufficient, truly free, or his life is as little devoted to the service of other individuals as the life of the city is devoted to the service of other cities. But

⁴⁸ *Theaetetus* 178a5-8; cf. *Laws* 896e4-6.

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the philosopher in the good city is just also in the sense that he serves his fellow men, his fellow citizens, his city, or that he obeys the law. That is to say, the philosopher is just also in the sense in which all members of the just city, and in a way all just members of any city, regardless of whether they are philosophers or not, are just. Yet justice in this second sense is not intrinsically attractive or choiceworthy for its own sake but is good only with a view to its consequences; or it is not noble but necessary: the philosopher serves the city, even the good city, not, as he seeks the truth, from natural inclination, from *eros*, but under compulsion (519e-520b; 540b4-5, e1-2). Justice in the first sense may be said to be the advantage of the stronger, *i.e.* of the most superior man, and justice in the second sense the advantage of the weaker, *i.e.* of the inferior men. It should not be necessary but it is necessary to add that compulsion does not cease to be compulsion if it is self-compulsion.⁴⁹ According to a notion of justice which is more common than the one referred to in Socrates' definition, justice consists in not harming others; justice thus understood proves to be in the highest case merely a concomitant of the philosopher's greatness of soul. But if justice is taken in the larger sense according to which it consists in giving to each what is good for his soul, one must distinguish between the cases in which such giving is intrinsically attractive to the giver (these will be the cases of the potential philosophers) and those in which it is merely a duty or compulsory. This distinction, incidentally, underlies the difference between the voluntary conversations of Socrates (the conversations which he spontaneously seeks) and the compulsory ones (those which he cannot with propriety avoid). The clear distinction between the justice which is choiceworthy for its own sake wholly regardless of its consequences, and identical with philosophy, and the justice which is merely necessary, and identical in the highest imaginable case with the rule of the philosopher, is rendered possible by the abstraction from *eros* which is characteristic of the *Republic*—an abstraction which is also effective in the simile of the Cave in so far as that simile presents the ascent from the cave to the light of the sun as entirely compulsory (515c5-516a1). For one might well say that there is no reason why the philosopher should not engage in political activity out of that kind of love of one's own which is patriotism.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Einleitung zur Tugendlehre I and II.

⁵⁰ Consider *Apology of Socrates* 30a3-4.

By the end of the seventh book justice has come to sight fully. Socrates has performed the duty laid upon him by Glaucon and Adeimantus to show that justice is choiceworthy for its own sake, regardless of its consequences, and therefore that it is unqualifiedly preferable to injustice. Nevertheless the conversation continues, for it seems that our clear grasp of justice does not include a clear grasp of injustice but must be supplemented by a clear grasp of the wholly unjust city and the wholly unjust man: only after we have seen the wholly unjust city and the wholly unjust man with the same clarity with which we have seen the wholly just city and the wholly just man will we be able to judge whether we ought to follow Socrates' friend Thrasymachus who chooses injustice or Socrates himself who chooses justice (545a2-b2; cf. 498c9-d1). This in turn requires that the fiction of the possibility of the just city be maintained. As a matter of fact, the *Republic* never abandons the fiction that the just city as a society of human beings, as distinguished from a society of gods or sons of gods (*Laws* 739b-e), is possible. When Socrates turns to the study of injustice, it even becomes necessary for him to reaffirm this fiction with greater force than ever before. The unjust city will be uglier, more condemnable, more deserving indignation in proportion as the just city will be more possible. Anger, indignation (Adeimantus' favorite passion—cf. 426e4 with 366c6-7), spiritedness could never come into their own if the just city were not possible. Or inversely, exaltation of spiritedness is the inevitable by-product of the utopia—of the belief that the cessation of evils is possible—taken seriously; the belief that all evil is due to human fault (cf. 379c5-7 and 617e4-5) makes man infinitely responsible; it leads to the consequence that not only vice but all evil is voluntary. But the possibility of the just city will remain doubtful if the just city was never actual. Accordingly Socrates asserts now that the just city was once actual. More precisely, he makes the Muses assert it or rather imply it. The assertion that the just city was once actual, that it was actual in the beginning is, as one might say, a mythical assertion which agrees with the mythical premise that the best is the oldest. Socrates asserts then through the mouth of the Muses that the good city was actual in the beginning, prior to the emergence of evil, *i.e.* of the inferior kind of city (547b): the inferior cities are decayed forms of the good city, soiled fragments of the pure city which was entire; hence, the nearer in time a kind of inferior city is to the just city, the better it is, or vice versa. It is more proper to speak of the good

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and inferior regimes than of the good and inferior cities (cf. the transition from "cities" to "regimes" in 543c7ff.). According to Socrates, there are five kinds of regime worth mentioning: (1) kingship or aristocracy, (2) timocracy, (3) oligarchy, (4) democracy, and (5) tyranny. The descending order of regimes is modelled on Hesiod's descending order of the five races of men: the races of gold, of silver, of bronze, the divine race of heroes, the race of iron (546e-547a; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 106ff.). We see at once that the Platonic equivalent of Hesiod's divine race of heroes is democracy. We shall have to find the reason for this seemingly strange correspondence.

The *Republic* is based on the assumption that there is a strict parallel between the city and the soul. Accordingly Socrates asserts that just as there are five kinds of regimes, there are five kinds of characters of men. The distinction which for a short while was popular in present-day political science between the authoritarian and the democratic "personalities," as corresponding to the distinction between authoritarian and democratic societies, was a dim and crude reflection of Socrates' distinction between the kingly or aristocratic, the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic, and the tyrannical souls or men, as corresponding to the aristocratic, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical regimes. In this connection one might mention that in describing the regimes Socrates does not speak of "ideologies" belonging to them; he is concerned with the character of each kind of regime and with the end which it manifestly and knowingly pursues as well as with the political justification of the end in question in contradistinction to any trans-political justification stemming from cosmology, theology, metaphysics, philosophy of history, or myth. In his study of the inferior regimes he examines in each case first the regime and then the corresponding individual. He presents both the regime and the corresponding individual as coming into being out of the preceding one. We shall consider here only his account of democracy because of its crucial importance for the argument of the *Republic*. Democracy arises from oligarchy which in its turn arises from timocracy, the rule of insufficiently music warriors who are characterized by the supremacy of spiritedness. Oligarchy is the first regime in which desire is supreme. In oligarchy the ruling desire is that for wealth or money or unlimited acquisitiveness. The oligarchic man is thrifty and industrious, controls all desires other than the desire for money,

lacks education and possesses a superficial honesty derivative from the crudest self-interest. Oligarchy gives to each the unqualified right to dispose of his property as he sees fit. It thus renders inevitable the emergence of "drones," i.e. of members of the ruling class who are either burdened with debt or already bankrupt and hence disfranchised—of beggars who hanker after their squandered fortunes and hope to restore their fortunes and political power through a change of regime. Besides, the correct oligarchs themselves, being both rich and unconcerned with virtue and honor, render themselves and especially their sons fat, spoiled, and soft. They thus become despised by the lean and tough poor. Democracy comes into being when the poor, having become aware of their superiority to the rich and perhaps led by some drones who act as traitors to their class and possess skills which ordinarily only members of a ruling class possess, at an opportune moment make themselves masters of the city by defeating the rich, killing and exiling some of them and permitting the rest to live with them in possession of full citizen rights. Democracy itself is characterized by freedom which includes the right to say and do whatever one wishes: everyone can follow the way of life which pleases him most. Hence democracy is the regime which fosters the greatest variety: every way of life, every regime can be found in it. Hence, we must understand, democracy is the only regime other than the best in which the philosopher can lead his peculiar way of life without being disturbed: it is for this reason that with some exaggeration one can compare democracy to Hesiod's age of the divine race of heroes which comes closer to the golden age than any other. Plato himself called the Athenian democracy, looking back on it from the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, "golden" (*Seventh Letter* 324d7-8). Since democracy, in contradistinction to the three other bad regimes, is both bad and permissive, it is that regime in which the frank quest for the best regime is at home: the action of the *Republic* takes place under a democracy. Certainly in a democracy the citizen who is a philosopher is under no compulsion to participate in political life or to hold office. One is thus led to wonder why Socrates did not assign to democracy the highest place among the inferior regimes or rather the highest place simply, seeing that the best regime is not possible. One could say that he showed his preference for democracy by deed: by spending his whole life in democratic Athens, by fighting for her in her wars and by dying in

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obedience to her laws. However this may be, he surely did not prefer democracy to all other regimes in speech. The reason is that, being a just man in more than one sense, he thought of the well-being not merely of the philosophers but of the non-philosophers as well, and he held that democracy is not designed for inducing the non-philosophers to attempt to become as good as they possibly can, for the end of democracy is not virtue but freedom, *i.e.* the freedom to live either nobly or basely according to one's liking. Therefore he assigns to democracy a rank even lower than to oligarchy since oligarchy requires some kind of restraint whereas democracy, as he presents it, abhors every kind of restraint. One could say that, adapting himself to his subject matter, he abandons all restraint when speaking of the regime which loathes restraint. In a democracy, he asserts, no one is compelled to rule or to be ruled, if he does not like it; he can live at peace while his city is at war; sentence to capital punishment does not have the slightest consequence for the condemned man: he is not even jailed; the order of rulers and ruled is completely reversed: the father behaves as if he were a boy and the son neither respects nor fears the father, the teacher fears his pupils while the pupils pay no attention to the teacher, and there is complete equality of the sexes; even horses and donkeys no longer step aside when encountering human beings. Plato writes as if the Athenian democracy had not carried out Socrates' execution, and Socrates speaks as if the Athenian democracy had not engaged in an orgy of bloody persecution of guilty and innocent alike when the Hermes statues were mutilated at the beginning of the Sicilian expedition.⁵¹ Socrates' exaggeration of the licentious mildness of classical democracy is matched by an almost equally strong exaggeration of the intemperance of democratic man. He could indeed not avoid the latter exaggeration if he did not wish to deviate from the procedure which he follows in his discussion of the inferior regimes. That procedure—a consequence of the parallel between the city and the individual—consists in understanding the man corresponding to an inferior regime as the son of a father corresponding to the preceding regime. Hence the democratic man comes to sight as the son of an oligarchic father, as the degenerate son of a wealthy father who is concerned with nothing but making money: the democratic man is a drone, the fat, soft, and prodigal

⁵¹ Thucydides VI 27-29, 53-61.

playboy, the Lotus-eater who, assigning a kind of equality to equal and unequal things, lives one day in complete surrender to the lowest desires and the next day ascetically, or who according to Marx's ideal "goes hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, raises cattle in the evening, devotes himself to philosophy after dinner,"⁸² i.e. does at all times what he happens to like; the democratic man is not the lean, tough and thrifty peasant or craftsman who has a single job (cf. 564c9-565b1, 575c). Socrates' deliberately exaggerated blame of democracy becomes intelligible to some extent once one considers its immediate addressee, the austere Adeimantus, who is not a friend of laughter and who had been the addressee of the austere discussion of poetry in the section on the education of the warriors: by his exaggerated blame of democracy Socrates lends words to Adeimantus' "dream" of democracy (cf. 563d2 with 389a7). One must also not forget that the sanguine account of the multitude, which was provisionally required in order to prove the harmony between the city and philosophy, is in need of being redressed; the exaggerated blame of democracy reminds us again of the disharmony between philosophy and the people.

After Socrates has brought to light the entirely unjust regime and the entirely unjust man and then compared the life of the entirely unjust man with that of the perfectly just man, it becomes clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that justice is preferable to injustice. Nevertheless the conversation continues. Socrates suddenly returns to the subject of poetry, a subject which had already been discussed at great length when the education of the warriors was being considered. We must try to understand this apparently unmotivated return. In an explicit digression from the discussion of tyranny, Socrates had noted that the poets praise tyrants and are honored by tyrants (and also by democracy) whereas they are not honored by the three better regimes (568a8-d4). Tyranny and democracy are characterized by the surrender to the sensual desires, including the most lawless ones. The tyrant is *Eros* incarnate. And the poets sing the praise of *Eros*. They pay very great attention and homage precisely to that phenomenon from which Socrates abstracts in the *Republic* to the best of his powers. The poets therefore foster injustice. So does Thrasymachus. Therefore, just as in spite of this Socrates could become a friend of Thrasymachus, there is no reason

⁸² *Die deutsche Ideologie* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1955) 30.

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why he could not be a friend of the poets and especially of Homer. Perhaps Socrates needs the poets in order to restore, on another occasion, the dignity of *eros*: the *Banquet*, the only Platonic dialogue in which Socrates is shown to converse with poets, is devoted entirely to the praise of *eros*.

When using the fate of Thrasy-machus in the *Republic* as a key to the truth about poetry, we are mindful of the kinship between rhetoric and poetry as indicated in the *Gorgias* (502b1-d9). But we must not overlook the difference between rhetoric and poetry. There are two kinds of rhetoric, the erotic rhetoric described in the *Phaedrus*, of which Socrates was a master and which is surely not represented by Thrasy-machus, and the other kind which is represented by Thrasy-machus. That other kind consists of three forms: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic. The *Apology of Socrates* is a piece of forensic rhetoric, while in the *Menexenus* Socrates plays with epideictic rhetoric. Socrates does not engage in deliberative rhetoric, i.e. in political rhetoric proper. The closest approximation to deliberative rhetoric in the *Corpus Platonicum* would seem to be Pausanias' speech in the *Banquet* in which the speaker proposes a change, favorable to lovers, in the Athenian law regarding *eros*.

The foundation for the return to poetry in the tenth book was laid at the very beginning of the discussion of the inferior regimes and the inferior souls. The transition from the best regime to the inferior regimes was explicitly ascribed to the Muses speaking "tragically," and the transition from the best man to the inferior men has in fact a slightly "comical" character (545d7-e3, 549c2-e2): poetry takes the lead when the descent from the highest theme—justice understood as philosophy—begins. The return to poetry, which is preceded by the account of the inferior regimes and the inferior souls, is followed by a discussion of "the greatest rewards for virtue," i.e. the rewards not inherent in justice or philosophy as such (608c, 614a). The second discussion of poetry constitutes the center of that part of the *Republic* in which the conversation descends from the highest theme. This cannot be surprising, for philosophy as quest for the truth is the highest activity of man and poetry is not concerned with the truth.

In the first discussion of poetry, which preceded by a long time the introduction of philosophy as a theme, poetry's unconcern with the truth was its chief recommendation, for at that time it was untruth that was needed (377a1-6). The most excellent poets were

expelled from the city, not because they teach untruth but because they teach the wrong kind of untruth. But in the meantime it has become clear that only the life of the philosophizing man in so far as he philosophizes is the just life, and that life, so far from needing untruth, utterly rejects it (485c3-d5). The progress from the city, even the best city, to the philosopher requires, it seems, a progress from the qualified acceptance of poetry to its unqualified rejection.

In the light of philosophy poetry reveals itself as the imitation of imitations of the truth, *i.e.* of the ideas. The contemplation of the ideas is the activity of the philosopher, the imitation of the ideas is the activity of the ordinary artisan, and the imitation of the works of artisans is the activity of the poets and other "imitative" artisans. To begin with, Socrates presents the order of rank in these terms: the maker of the ideas (*e.g.* of the idea of the bed) is the god, the maker of the imitation (of the bed which can be used) is the artisan, and the maker of the imitation of the imitation (of the painting of a bed) is the imitative artisan. In the repetition he states the order of rank in these terms: first the user, then the artisan, and finally the imitative artisan. The idea of the bed, we shall then say, resides in the user who determines the "form" of the bed with a view to the end for which it is to be used. The user is then the one who possesses the highest or most authoritative knowledge: the highest knowledge is not that of any artisan as such at all; the poet who stands at the opposite pole from the user does not possess any knowledge, not even right opinion (601c6-602b11). The preference given to the arts proper which are concerned with the useful rather than with a certain kind of the beautifully pleasant (389e12-390a5) is in agreement with the notion that the good city is a city of artisans or with the abstraction from *eros*. Nor shall we overlook the fact that the order of rank referred to in the first half of the tenth book abstracts from the warriors: it looks as if the healthy city, which did not know warriors or imitative artisans (373b5-7), were to be restored with its natural head—the philosophers—added to it. In order to understand Socrates' seemingly outrageous judgment on poetry, one must first identify the artisans whose work the poet imitates. The poets' themes are above all human beings as referred to virtue and vice; the poets see the human things in the light of virtue; but the virtue toward which they look is an imperfect and even distorted image of virtue (598e1-2, 599c6-d3, 600e4-5). The artisan whom the poet imitates is the non-philosophic legislator who

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is himself an imperfect imitator of virtue (cf. 501b and 514b4-515a3). In particular, justice as understood by the city is necessarily the work of the legislator, for the just as understood by the city is the legal. No one expressed Socrates' suggestion more clearly than Nietzsche who said that "the poets were always the valets of some morality."⁵³ But according to the French saying, for a valet there is no hero: are the poets (at least those who are not entirely stupid) not aware of the secret weaknesses of their heroes? This is indeed the case according to Socrates. The poets bring to light, for instance, the full force of the grief which a man feels for the loss of someone dear to him—of a feeling to which a respectable man would not give adequate utterance except when he is alone because its adequate utterance in the presence of others is not becoming and lawful: the poets bring to light that in our nature which the law forcibly restrains (603e3-604b8, 606a3-607a9). The poets as spokesmen of the passions oppose the legislator as spokesman of reason. Yet the non-philosophic legislator is not unqualifiedly the spokesman of reason; his laws are very far from being simply the dictates of reason. The poets have a broader view of human life as the conflict between passion and reason (390d1-6) than do the legislators; they show the limitations of law. But if this is so, if the poets are perhaps the men who understand best the nature of the passions which the law should restrain, they are very far from being merely the servants of the legislators but also the men from whom the prudent legislator will learn. The genuine "quarrel between philosophy and poetry" (607b5-6) concerns, from the philosopher's point of view, not the worth of poetry as such, but the order of rank of philosophy and poetry. According to Socrates, poetry is legitimate only as ministerial to the "user" *par excellence*, to the king (597e7) who is the philosopher, and not as autonomous. For autonomous poetry presents human life as autonomous, i.e. not as directed toward the philosophic life, and it therefore never presents the philosophic life except in its distortion by comedy; hence autonomous poetry (regardless of whether it is dramatic or not) is necessarily either tragedy or comedy (or some mixture of both) since the non-philosophic life has either no way out of its fundamental difficulty or else only an inept one. But ministerial poetry presents the non-philosophic life as ministerial to the philosophic life and therefore,

⁵³ *The Gay Science* nr. 1.

above all, the philosophic life itself (cf. 604e). The greatest example of ministerial poetry is the Platonic dialogue.

The *Republic* ends with a discussion of the greatest rewards for justice and the greatest punishments for injustice. The discussion consists of three parts: (1) proof of the immortality of the soul; (2) the divine and human rewards and punishments while man is alive; (3) the rewards and punishments after death. The central part is silent about philosophy: rewards for justice and punishments for injustice during life are needed for the non-philosophers whose justice does not have the intrinsic attractiveness which the justice peculiar to the philosophers has. No one who has understood the dual meaning of justice can fail to see the necessity of Socrates' "Philistine" utterance on the earthly rewards which the just, generally speaking, receive (613d, c4). Socrates, who knew Glaucon, is a better judge of what is good for Glaucon than any reader of the *Republic*, and surely than the modern "idealists" who shudder in a thoroughly unmanly way at the thought that men who are pillars of a stable society through their uprightness, which indeed must not be entirely divorced from ability or artfulness, are likely to be rewarded by their society. This thought is an indispensable corrective to Glaucon's exaggerated statement in his long speech about the extreme sufferings of the genuinely just man: Glaucon could not have known what a genuinely just man is. It cannot be the duty of a genuinely just man like Socrates to drive weaker men to despair of the possibility of some order and decency in human affairs, and least of all those who, by virtue of their inclinations, their descent, and their abilities, may have some public responsibility. For Glaucon it is more than enough that he will remember for the rest of his days and perhaps transmit to others the many grand and perplexing sights which Socrates has conjured for his benefit in that memorable night in the Piraeus. The account of the rewards and punishments after death is given in the form of a myth. The myth is not baseless since it is based on a proof of the immortality of the souls. The soul cannot be immortal if it is composed of many things unless the composition is most perfect. But the soul as we know it from our experience lacks that perfect harmony. In order to find out the truth, one would have to recover by reasoning the original or true nature of the soul (611b-612a). This reasoning is not achieved in the *Republic*. That is to say, Socrates proves the immortality of the soul without having brought to

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light the nature of the soul. The situation at the end of the *Republic* corresponds precisely to the situation at the end of the first book, where Socrates makes clear that he has proved that justice is salutary without knowing the What or nature of justice. The discussion following the first book does bring to light the nature of justice as the right order of the soul, yet how can one know the right order of the soul if one does not know the nature of the soul? Let us remember here again the fact that the parallel between soul and city, which is the premise of the doctrine of the soul stated in the *Republic*, is evidently questionable and even untenable. The *Republic* cannot bring to light the nature of the soul because it abstracts from the body and from *eros*; by abstracting from the body and *eros*, the *Republic* in fact abstracts from the soul; the *Republic* abstracts from nature; this abstraction is necessary if justice as full dedication to the common good of a particular city is to be praised as choiceworthy for its own sake; and why this praise is necessary, should not be in need of an argument. If we are concerned with finding out precisely what justice is, we must take "another longer way around" in our study of the soul than the way which is taken in the *Republic* (504b; cf. 506d). This does not mean that what we learn from the *Republic* about justice is not true or is altogether provisional. The first book surely does not teach what justice is, and yet by presenting Socrates' taming of Thrasymachus as an act of justice, it lets us see justice. The teaching of the *Republic* regarding justice can be true although it is not complete, in so far as the nature of justice depends decisively on the nature of the city—for even the trans-political cannot be understood as such except if the city is understood—and the city is completely intelligible because its limits can be made perfectly manifest: to see these limits, one need not have answered the question regarding the whole; it is sufficient for the purpose to have raised the question regarding the whole. The *Republic* then indeed makes clear what justice is. As Cicero has observed, the *Republic* does not bring to light the best possible regime but rather the nature of political things⁵⁴—the nature of the city. Socrates makes clear in the *Republic* of what character the city would have to be in order to satisfy the highest need of man. By letting us see that the city constructed in accordance with this requirement is not possible, he lets us see the essential limits, the nature, of the city.

⁵⁴ *De republica* II 52.